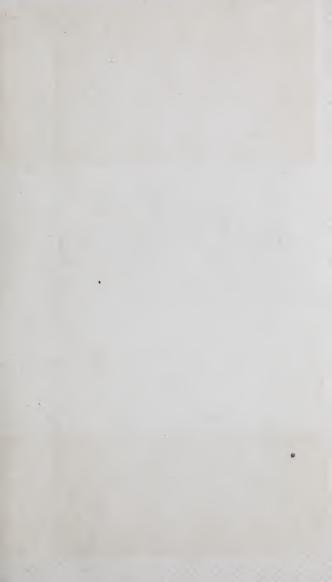
The Conversion of India

EMIL P. BERG

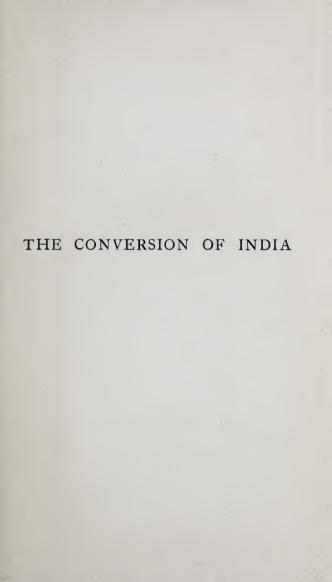
PRINCETON, N. J.

Purchased by the Hamill Missionary Fund.

BV 3265 .B47 1911 Berg, Emil P. The conversion of India, or Reconciliation between







Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2017 with funding from Princeton Theological Seminary Library

The Conversion of India

Or

Reconciliation between Christianity
and Hinduism

Being

Studies in Indian Missions

APR 8 1912

Ву

Emil P. Berg

Author of "Transformed Hinduism," "Ideals of Buddhism"
"God the Beautiful," "The Drama of the Apocalypse"
"Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship"
"The Spiritual Biography of Jesus Christ"
"Where is Heaven?"

London
Arthur H. Stockwell
29 Ludgate Hill, E.C.

[All rights reserved]

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co. At the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

DEDICATED TO THE NOBLE ARMY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN INDIA

AS A SOUVENIR OF

THE WORLD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE
HELD AT EDINBURGH IN JUNE 1910



CONTENTS

			PAGE
Introl	DUCTION		ix
CHAP.			
	RELIGIOUS SITUATION OF INDIA	٠	1
~ II.	REFORMED CHRISTIANITY		40
III.	Infallibility		69
IV.	THE BEAUTIFUL	٠	83
- v.	THE FUTURE OF INDIA		91
VI.	VICTORIOUS CHRISTIANITY .		122
VII.	India's Intellectual Greatness		143
VIII.	FATALISM AND METEMPSYCHOSIS		157
IX.	Мача		161
X.	Monotheism		168
XI.	Communion		187
XII.	REFORMS IN INDIA		203



INTRODUCTION

My DEAR FRIEND,—At your desire, I have now completed the present little work, which is intended to be a companion volume to my previously written works, say, "Transformed Hinduism," "Ideals of Buddhism," "God the Beautiful," "Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship," &c.

As you will know, the attempted conversion of India to Christianity has so far been a disappointing enterprise. In spite of the heavy sacrifices of men and money (especially during the last 150 years) by zealous Protestant missionaries, barely $2\frac{1}{2}$ million Hindus have been converted to the Christian faith, out of a population of fully 300 million souls. Now, considering how deeply our country is interested in the welfare of India, it comes

to be a momentous question to all true Christians, how the conquest by Jesus of the "spiritual Empire of India" can be accomplished most speedily and effectually.

The present work is a further contribution towards the solution of this difficult problem, for in the light of modern knowledge, the old basis of the missionary appeal must be modified. It aims therefore at enlightening the Christian Church at home how best to carry on its spiritual warfare against the giant forces of Idolatry, Polytheism, Pantheism, and the spirit of materialism and worldliness which have hitherto, and, alas, so successfully, barred the entrance of Christianity into India. It treats the problem from a fresh point of view and gives a new method, which I am convinced has truth on its side. It has also the advantage of being favoured by many cultured Hindus who in secret are lovers of Jesus, and who know the true situation and the remedy better than the Christian Church at home.

The success of the movement would un-

doubtedly be greatly furthered if the advanced school of theologians in this country were also to take up with greater zeal the reform of the Christian Church on the lines suggested. Without a shadow of doubt such a reform would help greatly in the overthrow of superstitious beliefs, and assist mightily in the triumphant progress of true religion over the whole world. We should then see Christianity in its full beauty and majesty, stripped of the tawdry accretions which never properly belonged to it—however serviceable or necessary these might have been as symbols when the Church passed through ages of darkness, and to which it had to accommodate itself in order to gain converts when a belief in the miraculous was normal and unquestioned.

I need say no more. With this and the previous works our studies of "Reformed Christianity" as a conquering force of Hinduism and Buddhism are brought to a close.

THE AUTHOR.



THE CONVERSION OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

RELIGIOUS SITUATION OF INDIA

From your last letter I see that you wish me to write more fully about Monotheism, as the battle-ground upon which the true and monotheistic religion of Jesus must fight against the polytheistic faith of the Hindus. I quite agree with you. Indeed, this was my own experience when I visited India and had confidential talks with several pundits whom I met on my travels. An evening spent at the house of one of these learned men in Calcutta is still fresh in my memory, and may be worth describing even

at considerable length. All present were highly educated. They spoke English fluently, their views of things in general were liberal, and, above all, they were said to be open to convictions. To search after "truth" was their life's aim and object.

According to Eastern custom, the opinion of the oldest guest was first solicited; and the "religious situation of India" was, at my request, the subject chosen for friendly discussion. The elderly pundit, a noble-looking Brahman, but prejudiced against Christianity, bowed profoundly and addressed us in the following terms:—

"There can be no doubt that Western civilisation, with its science and inventions, its culture and habits of thought, has during the last fifty years penetrated deeply into the life of the younger generation of our people, and the leaven is silently but gradually working through all classes of the community, towards the overthrow of many false notions. We welcome all such light from whatever quarter it may come.

"As regards the religious situation, however, I see little prospect of success for the progress of Christianity in India as it has hitherto been promulgated, according to antiquated methods. Personally, I believe that the Christian missionaries, as a body, comprise some of the ablest and most devoted men who have come to India, and that they have been inspired by an unselfish desire for the good of the whole people. All honour to these men and women, who have even risked their lives for our sake. Unfortunately for them and for the cause which they represent, experience has shown that their sacrifices and labours have been out of all proportion to their pitifully small gains; in fact, the religious crusade has practically turned out a gigantic failure. To enforce the truth of this bold assertion, are there not trustworthy statistics published, which tell us that, out of a population of fully 300 million souls, the actual result of nearly 150 years of Protestant enterprise, and some 1200 years if you include the Catholic

missions, have only been the conversion of about 21 millions of our people? Gentlemen" (and he gave a quiet smile), "at this snail's pace, after the struggles of so many long centuries, you can easily calculate that it will take many more millenniums-nay, perhaps a whole Kali-Yuga age-before all India's children can be tempted by the Christian propaganda to abandon their fathers' faith. God forbid that even at that distant time such a misfortune should overtake India. But, gentlemen, I have not done yet. If the above figures are analysed, it will be found that a large percentage of the converts have been drawn from the outcasts of our people, those who are too degraded and brutalised to be admitted into any respectable Hindu society, and whom, therefore, higher castes are thankful to get rid of, as we ourselves shun even their shadows cast on our path. As regards the other castes who respect themselves and who are loyal to their faith, the evidence of these many centuries has shown conclusively that, taken as a whole, the Hindus wish to have nothing to do with the Western religion. They feel strongly that their own ancestral faith is good enough for them and for their children. It satisfies all their needs and cravings, both for this life and for the next; moreover, in their daily contact with Christians in India, they see that their own divine faith is in every respect superior, for it produces better men and women and more obedient and Godfearing children. What I have now stated are facts, which cannot be gainsaid. Gentlemen, you have my unprejudiced opinion in the remarks I have ventured to make."

When he stopped, the Brahman shut his eyes for a little, as if engaged in earnest prayer, and there was silence for a minute or two.

I confess that this formidable impeachment of Christianity, which apparently contained much that was true, filled me, as a Christian, with depressing thoughts. Our polite host now desired me to continue the discussion. I thought it wiser, however, to put off the

trying ordeal, and sought rather to divert the conversation into another channel. I asked the company whether, as outsiders to Christianity, they would first oblige me by pointing out the causes which, in their opinion, had chiefly contributed to retard the progress of Christianity in India. After a pause, one of the ablest-looking took up the conversation. He was a barrister in one of the High Courts, keen-witted and eloquent, with a strong bent in favour of Christianity, and I afterwards learned that he was a Ben-He made an ingenious statement, which seemed to me to contain much truth, and which emphasised from a new point the necessity of revising the old-fashioned method in use for the conversion to Christianity of a country like India.

He said in effect: "Gentlemen, our esteemed Scottish friend has raised a difficult question. To answer it properly may cause him pain, but, believe me, I am solely actuated by love of truth and goodwill for our honourable guest. Allow me, first, to express my

surprise that the British nation should supply us yearly with an ever-increasing number of missionaries, neither invited nor made welcome by my countrymen; and that this nation, which I have always regarded as the most intelligent and practical in the world, should continue to cling so tenaciously to old methods in promulgating their religious system in India. The experience of many years has shown me that these methods are not effective and must necessarily lead to failure. The only reason for this perverted practice which I can find is that they are still dominated by the notion of one called Luther, and of other reformers in the sixteenth century, that their Church is in possession of an 'infallible' sacred book. This claim, dating from the dark ages, although confirmed by several Church Councils, cannot for a moment be maintained in the light of Western science and of the investigations of leading scholars in Europe within the last fifty years upon this interesting question. I understand that the step thus taken by the reformers merely transferred the allegiance

of the people from a pretended infallible Church and a corrupt priesthood to what they considered an 'infallible' book; nor can one deny that they gained liberty of thought and escape from the thraldom of an arrogant priesthood centred in a city called Rome. The enlightened conscience of the Christians, loyal to the pole-star of truth, must surely, however, demand a revision of these ancient dogmas and assumptions, and reject what is erroneous or hostile to the true glory of God and His guidance of humanity to Himself.

"Gentlemen, to my mind the greatest stumbling-block lies in the fact that the Christian missionaries have come across the seven seas, simply to teach us a diluted kind of Polytheism, expressed in a Trinity of Gods who are yet One; maintaining further that one of these persons of the Trinity actually came down to earth some 2000 years ago from his celestial glory, to save humanity from endless woe. I need not stop here to explain this more fully, as most of you may not clearly

know what is understood by the 'Gospel story,' but this I may add, that not only is this incarnate God at the present moment worshipped by a large number of believers, but his own mother, as a virgin, is worshipped by them also. Now, gentlemen, I submit that this diluted Polytheism will never convert India. We confess, and all men know, that we are Polytheists, and, as such, Christians have nothing to teach us; indeed, we are proud of having not merely one, but a choice of divine incarnations, divine saviours, and celestial Avatars. Of these we have eight more than the Christians, and therefore our choice is more likely to suit everybody. I am confident that the various divine incarnations which we worship suit us better, and are more useful to us in this world, and in our soul transmigrations, than their single incarnation. As polytheistic worshippers we reject the polytheistic Trinity of Gods which their teachers wish us to worship. We decline to become Christians. We are content with what we have and what we are."

At these words a murmur of applause was heard from the Hindu guests. The Bengalese barrister looked at me with a smile, and said: "Excuse me, my dear Sahib, if I have hurt your feelings; I shall now make amends and come to your rescue." He then turned to the rest of the company, and continued in a melodious voice, speaking with great earnestness.

"Now, gentlemen, having stated the chief cause of the failure, allow me to suggest the cure, even although my doing so may tell against our own faith. As you know, I have studied the sacred books of the Christians for my own satisfaction, and know what I am speaking about. The only effectual way, and the speediest, for the overthrow of both Pantheism and Polytheism in India (both of which, happily, still form a compact phalanx against the assaults of militant Christianity) is for the latter to oppose Polytheism by a pure and simple Monotheism. By doing so it will be on the lines of divine truth, seeing that the founder of the sect was born and brought up

in the most monotheistic country in the world, and lived, laboured, preached, and died as a pure Monotheist, a worshipper of the one God.

"In the struggle between Polytheism and Monotheism it is, according to the view of many, more than probable that the latter in course of time will come out of the fight victorious, just as in philosophy Monism has finally overcome Dualism and kindred errors.

"As an outsider, I cannot judge properly, but from the advancement of the Western nations in civilisation, I should think that the time has arrived for the thorough revision of their theological creeds and dogmas, the fruit of spiritual despotism and ignorance, and chief among these is the dogma bearing upon the Trinity. This ought to be expunged from their creed. Your friends at home may say that Christians in daily practice worship only one God, but a Hindu obtains a different impression from the universal proclamation of missionaries that they have come here to 'preach Jesus, the second person in the God-

head of the Trinity, and his salvation.' They ought to say, of course, that they have come to preach Jesus' message of good news to the world, by which he meant that God, being one and not a Trinity, was not only a creator, a king of righteousness and truth, such as Moses and others had proclaimed long before him, but, above all, that He was our Father in Heaven, with an infinite wealth of love and compassion for His children; that all men were brethren; that in love and self-denial we should serve each other; that our love and devotion to God should be so strong that we would rather suffer death than deny Himyea, that for His sake, and to prove our love to Him, we would be willing even to give our lives for our brethren, and that, being God's children, we were divine in our origin and divine in our destiny. This oneness of divinity Jesus claimed for himself: the oneness consisting in our being identical in life, plans, and purposes with God Himself, just as Jesus is reported to have said, 'that he did everything to please his Father in Heaven.' It therefore

follows that, in sentiments and mutual love, God and Jesus were one for time and for eternity, as he also wished all his followers to become. In short, let your missionaries change their methods of attack, let them follow in the steps of the founder of the faith, and let them preach to the Hindus, who are all polytheistic worshippers, the simple message of Jesus: namely, Worship One God only, believe in the Unity of the Godhead, and in His almighty love towards us. In my opinion, such a message would win over India; the present Gospel message falls on deaf ears.

"By Monotheism you will glorify God, by Christology you dishonour God; surely it is time for you to try the former. The whole world may thus within many generations be won over more or less to the gospel of Jesus, as properly understood, as the revelation of God in His beautiful character and loving relationship to humanity—one and all of us bearing the seeds of Divinity in potentiality, although, perhaps, these may not everywhere be seen by us in earthly manifestations.

Therefore, I say again, if you wish to preach the gospel in India, let it be understood that in doing so you preach, as Jesus did, God only as the one Creator, Upholder, Saviour, and also our divine Father in Heaven, who abhors idolatry and Polytheism. After this message has penetrated the masses, and turned them from Polytheism and Paganism, your converts may then get the other lessons which they need. They will come to admire, love, and follow Jesus, and imitate his beautiful example of a life lived for God and for his brethren upon earth.

"Yes, truly, if all men are divine, then Jesus is pre-eminently so, revealing in his ideal life, as portrayed to us by his disciples, what God is in Himself and what He is towards us. From this point of view, Jesus may quite properly be called by his followers the Son of God, or the image of God, or the revealer of God, in whom God is well pleased, as the express image of God in human form. An image, however, is only the reflection of a Reality, and hence this simile gives us no

sanction to include Jesus in the Godhead, although it makes him to have been in his character and purpose one of the noblest reflections or images of God upon earth known so far. In this sense he is divine above all others. Yes, Jesus was human, but he was also divine, a son of glory who yet learned obedience through suffering.

"In conclusion, let me say to our Scottish friend that I remember reading of the celebrated missionary St. Paul, how he once arrived in the capital of Greece and preached outside the city upon a hill, the temple upon which was dedicated to the God of War. He was surrounded by a crowd of idlers, who were evidently all polytheists and who clamoured for a speech. Here, under these novel circumstances, his strong common-sense came to his aid. He preached Monotheism to them, emphasising that there is only one God in heaven to whom worship is due. He thus skilfully laid the foundation upon which our Scottish friend truly maintains that religion all the world over must be built, and with which the

name of Jesus will ever be associated in gratitude and love, as that of the master builder.

"Let me repeat that the ancient dogma or the Trinity has done more than anything else to hinder the progress of Christianity in socalled heathen lands, especially in those with an old civilisation like that of India.

"Now, gentlemen, my task is over; I have pointed out to you the causes of failure, and also the way by which the barriers may be broken down which have hindered the spread of the Gospel in India. The new method may be summed up in the words of Jesus: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.'"

The barrister here finished his speech; and I noticed that the latter part of it was received with marked coldness by the other Hindus, who evidently disapproved of his praise of Monotheism and the method which he had suggested for fighting Polytheism in all its forms. Later in the evening I parted most cordially with the assembled guests, after

hearing other interesting remarks from those present.

To one of these, a young Hindu of about twenty-five years, I was specially attracted. His finely-chiselled features, his soulful eyes, his refined manner and indefinable something, made me feel that I was in the presence of a kindred spirit. I was not mistaken. By chance we met the following evening near my hotel, and I invited him at once to spend an hour or two with me. To this he agreed.

I heard, to my regret, that he was in poor health, arising from an accident. Indeed, on reaching home I learned that about a fortnight after we met he had departed this life, following a serious operation.

During our friendly conversation, he confided to me that he had become a secret disciple of Jesus until he saw his way more clearly. Meanwhile, as a first step, he had embraced a strict monotheistic belief—not that which the Mohammedans preached, but that which Jesus had taught. This he looked upon as the most important preliminary step for

a Hindu to take, and indeed the first steppingstone for any one who wanted to arrive at a true Religion of Humanity based upon God's unity, there being only one God, and this God's essential character being love. This conception he believed was found in all its beauty and perfection only in the Christian religion, the principles and beliefs of which, as proclaimed by Jesus, were those upon which Jesus himself had lived and worked, suffered and died.

The young Hindu dwelt on the Gospel story, and I was somewhat surprised to hear him referring to the trial, sufferings, and death of Jesus, not as having taken place 1900 years ago in the dim past, but as if these were quite recent events. The reason seems to have been that it was only lately that he had begun with great zeal to study the life of Jesus, which had therefore for him all the charms of novelty. What struck me, however, was his enthusiastic love for Jesus, and, above all, the novel conception which he had formed of the true mission and work of Jesus upon earth—a con-

ception in some respects more spiritual than the ancient Jewish conception of literal blood covenants, as reflected in evangelical teaching current at home.

I shall now give you a summary of his remarks and arguments, and with these I will close my letter. He began somewhat as follows:—

"I do not wish to be personal, but you Englishmen are so cold, so self-contained, you freeze us with your aloofness. Surely the love in your hearts can never become the same absorbing passion that it is with us, acquiring the mastery of our souls and sweeping everything before it until its object is attained. And as it is with earthly love, so it is with love in its divine aspect, towards God Himself.

"Ah, since Jesus revealed to me what God really was to him and what he wished He should be to us all, it has been my aspiration, day and night, to become better acquainted with God Himself. Communion with Him has been the atmosphere in which my soul breathed. And now, when I realise in dim

outline God's unity, His personality, His exceeding beauty, love, and graciousness, the vision has overmastered my soul as it did that of Jesus, when God revealed Himself to his responsive, seeking soul. This, the 'I am of existence,' the highest category of personality, is not, like Brahm, unapproachable, unresponsive, distant from all human sorrows and sins, but is the only one and true God and Creator proclaimed by Jesus as love and mercy, who shares our trials and bears them with us in sympathy, as a mother clasps her treasure of love to her heart to shield and bless it.

"Yes, indeed, how can I express my adoration and worship of such a God of love and beauty and the giver of joy, who knows how to bless and cheer the soul through life's pilgrimage, and at length satisfies every craving for perfection and happiness? I do not worship Jesus, for that would be blasphemy. I wish to follow in his recorded steps, i.e. the sublime principles by which he lived and died, even although in details his biographers may have idealised him more or less. Jesus will even

then be to me the safest guide, and with him I wish to worship one God, both his and our divine Father in heaven, to whom alone worship is truly due; the only self-existent eternal God, Creator and Upholder of the world, and yet the one personal, loving God who rules and overrules everything in nature, providence and grace, and who called us into being that we might be partakers of His own glorious life and character. Yes, thanks to thee, Jesus, messenger and ambassador of the Highest, for revealing to Humanity the true God and His true character; and, alas, thy sole reward was scorn, persecution, sorrow, and death.

"Therefore, why do not you Englishmen take up the message of the prophet of the Highest and preach to my beloved India the monotheistic faith, which Jesus proclaimed in all its beauty, preciousness, and fulness in Judea? Instead of this, the Hindus find you putting Jesus in the forefront of your preaching on all occasions, as I hear a sect called Catholics do with the mother of Jesus. They worship and pray to her, because God the Father is con-

sidered by them as unapproachable, except through her or her son. Surely this is as gross idolatry as is seen among our various sects here who, you know, never pray to Brahm, except through its celestial intermediaries. These I look upon as products of men's imagination, and belief in these dishonours the true God and degrades the worshippers. Why do Christians come to India to spread such idolatrous worship when we have it ourselves? Let them preach a pure Monotheism such as Jesus believed in and preached. We understand the reason and see the urgent need for it in a country like India, and so would Jesus, I am sure, if he lived to-day.

"Now, as regards the trial of Jesus, which I have read with great interest, I will say this, that the sadness, indeed the tragedy of it, is that Jesus was perfectly innocent of the grave charges brought against him, blasphemy against Jehovah and open rebellion against Imperial Rome. My feeling of resentment against his murderers is intensified when I consider that the frail, worn-out body of this

Syrian fakir was the glorious temple of the most lofty genius, and of the purest and most lovable character, whose soul proved its true divinity by consecration and loving communion with his Father in Heaven. Hence, too, his unceasing love and pity towards his brethren upon earth, in whom he declared that God had implanted the seed of divinity."

He continued: "What is the portrait we can draw of Jesus after reading the extant memoirs, which I presume are authentic, say, his life looked at by four authors from different points of view, and each evidently written for a different purpose? Is it not that Jesus was unselfish to the core, living wholly for God, for whom his heart was aflame with adoration and praise, and therefore living in the world for love, for service, for truth, for duty, with a perfect filial submission to his heavenly Father's will? If this is his portrait, how can we help loving and admiring him for what he was and what he did? It is true that on Calvary we find the crowning event of his

life, where the cross is to humanity the symbol of sacrifice for conscience and for love's sake, but to me the explanation of that event is not such as the missionaries usually give. I will explain my own view, which you may call the 'spiritual' aspect.

"My own belief is that Jesus' death was chiefly brought about by his novel presentation of God as a father of love, pity, and mercy, and of men as His children and therefore brethren of each other. Jesus' message proved the uselessness of bloody sacrifices in order to obtain pardon for sins, since God would forgive every sin through repentance and reformation, without the aid of priests, temples, altars, or bloody sacrifices involving the death of innocent animals. For a priesthood whose existence was bound up with bloody sacrifices and an intricate liturgical service believed to be planned by God Himself, such preaching was blasphemous. For this reason, as well as from fear of his popularity with the crowds at Jerusalem, his death was quietly planned and successfully carried out with the consent

of Rome, thus giving his murder a judicial character.

"This, you doubtless agree with me, was the chief cause of Jesus' death, but whence comes the glory of Calvary which evangelical churches have especially insisted upon? I believe they base it on this, that Jesus' death on the cross was a literal blood covenant ratified by God to save the human race. But is this Jewish or Rabbinical conception correct? My belief is that, to find the truth, we must look upon the death of Jesus, not from a carnal but from a spiritual point of view, and abandon the material and vulgar conception which has ruled the churches so long. The significance of his death consists chiefly in his having brought a spiritual sacrifice of self to God. In this respect we should follow his example if we wish to benefit by his death. Yes, his sacrifice was made on the altar of love, and proved his undying love to God. This was a spiritual, a perfect sacrifice, for it was a sacrifice of heart and will and love to God. We see him yielding his will to God's will,

and even his life at God's behest. This is his spiritual conflict and victory, and the world should know him especially as the victor over man's lower nature. He has thus become for ever God's beloved son and man's glorious example and redeemer. Jesus wished to bring all men to God by love and service. Furthermore, by showing them the true religion which exists between God and man, he opened the doors of heaven to every trembling sinner, every prodigal son who turns to his Father in Heaven for forgiveness. He has thus abolished all sacrifices of blood and the intervention of priests with prayers and ordinances. Therefore unflinchingly, in spite of the storm of opposition, Jesus was loyal to the gospel of love and mercy which he had proclaimed; yea, not a word he had spoken to glorify God and reveal Him to men in His beauty and loving spirit would he retract, even although threatened with death. To the last Jesus preached God's unutterable love and man's oneness with himself, and both in their divinity and sonship of God.

"Here was the glad message of the 'Gospel,' the joyful news for all mankind. Let us accept the invitation and go to our dear Father in Heaven, go direct without any priests to intercede for us, and without offerings of blood shed on our behalf to gain favour with God. Let us go, as Jesus encouraged us to do, as an erring child approaches the loved one at home, whom it has disobeved and grieved, with tears in its eyes and the prayer for forgiveness on its lips; and as the child dear to its parents' hearts will not be cast out by them, neither will the loving heart of God act in a different way. Nay, God will listen to the sinner's plea for mercy, freely forgive and welcome him back with open arms: 'Rejoice with me, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

I listened with surprise to the eloquent and vehement pleas of the young Oriental with his soul on fire on behalf of God and His anointed. When he stopped I told him that I was surprised at his knowledge of the

Scriptures, but that I was quite sure he was no believer in Calvin's extreme dogmas; that, in fact, he seemed the mouthpiece of modern theology and of some of the conclusions at which the new criticism had arrived. He confessed that he had consulted several religious books lately received from England. These seemed to him to bear the stamp of truth much more than the mediæval systems of theology which he heard had been in vogue so long, but which he understood were now rapidly being discarded by leading thinkers in the Western world, along with nearly the whole of Paul's elaborate machinery drawn from Rabbinical and Mystic sources, to atone for sin and procure redemption. He could not but think that in the issue the Christian world would get a more glorious and a truer conception of God, to the relief of humanity at large and its advancement in religious truth and happiness.

He wished to leave, but I urged him to stay, being delighted with the freshness of his utterances and his evident sincerity. I asked him, since he had got so far, if he would oblige me further with his own thoughts of the modern Christian faith, which might prove to be more acceptable to the Hindus than the old theology generally taught by European missionaries. He willingly agreed to my request, and said: "I must ask your forgiveness if you find my arguments rather longwinded, but here in India we never practise conciseness, as I understand is done in your country. Well, I shall try to summarise the leading benefits which I apprehend the world has gained by the death of Jesus:—

"1st. The death of Jesus on the cross illustrates the eternal truth that to live the life of love upon earth involves sacrifices, sometimes, as in his case, even unto death; yet the love life, living for others and for God, is a glorious life to live, because love is God's own life and full of bliss. It is the true mark, indeed the only one, of the divine sonship, where God is seen gradually realising Himself in the soul.

"2nd. Jesus also suffered unto death, and in

this he is also an inspiration to us, because he was the champion of truth, especially the truth of God's feelings towards humanity. By this truth which he boldly proclaimed, he drew upon himself the bitter hatred of the Jewish priesthood and rulers. Truth was sacred to Jesus, as it should be to us all, even although we may suffer scorn, hatred and persecution, and death itself, on account of it. 'Search for truth, stand up for truth,' should be our motto, as it was that of Jesus.

"3rd. Jesus on the cross left us a glorious example and inspiration to be like him in sympathy and help to others. With a heart full of compassion for the poor, the downtrodden, the unfortunate, the outcast, Jesus was always ready to help. For this reason, his soul burned with indignation against their oppressors. Read the Gospels and you can yet hear his vehement protests against the arrogance of the rulers of the synagogues, against the pride and worldliness of the priesthood, against the grinding oppression of the poor and the needy by the higher

classes. You will also hear his withering sarcasms at the sleek and unctuous hypocrites, who were most particular in carrying out the ceremonial religious services which were so much in vogue as substitutes for true heart worship. Ah, Jesus was a practical reformer. He sought by practical work and labour of love to lighten life's burden for others, and thereby take the first steps to bring heaven down upon earth. He realised, and so should we, that we are all parts of one organic humanity, the children of God, dear to the Father's heart.

"4th. It was not, however, Jesus' loving heart, his loyalty to truth, his overflowing benevolence, his pity and helpfulness, which alone contributed to nail him to the cross. Other and even higher causes led in the same direction. Let me point out some of these, even although I may repeat myself. As long as Jesus proclaimed God as a father, his enemies were not greatly disturbed in their minds. When, however, he carried this doctrine to its logical issue and showed them that all

bloody sacrifices and priestly intercessions were unnecessary, it was then that the persecution began in earnest which resulted in his death. This specific proclamation of Jesus, we may therefore say, was the chief cause which brought him to the cross. As already mentioned, Jesus taught that God's forgiveness and favour can be obtained only by repentance and reformation of life, without sacrifices of blood on the altar or the service and prayers of a priesthood. This was a startling truth for the age in which Jesus lived and for the Jewish people, who trusted absolutely to the sacrificial and ceremonial systems in which they and their fathers had been brought up for generations. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the crucifixion of Jesus was the answer which the Jewish priesthood gave to his so-called blasphemous utterances.

"5th. You may ask what I have to say about the 'blood covenant' by which sin was abolished on Calvary. I have been told of various conflicting theories which have arisen in connection with this dogma—and while I

understand that hardly any one of culture and learning would nowadays subscribe in full to Calvin's conception, who I have been told was not so much a theologian as a learned lawyer, from which sprang the evangelical teaching in vogue for many years: yet there are several great truths enshrined in it. This 'redemption of sinners' we may describe more properly as 'the spiritual atonement of Jesus,' and in this I imagine the truth is found in all its beauty and attractiveness, and will be so to the end of time. 'This spiritual atonement' is seen in a trinity of aspects in relation to God, to humanity, and to self. Let me, however, mention them as they occur to me, without a strict classification. First, I will point out that Vicariousness is the law of life. As I have read somewhere, 'Vicarious suffering is a deep law of life, inwrought into man's structure, and this is the true meaning of atonement.' Since we cannot escape from this principle, every one who wishes to be like Jesus and to benefit by his crucifixion must, figuratively, crucify self in order to save others. Hence, like Jesus, his followers often become *sin-bearers*, *i.e.* sufferers for the sins and follies of others in order to save them from deserved punishment. This is one important aspect of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

"6th. The same law of vicariousness also holds as regards our relation to God. Like Jesus, we must surrender our self-will to God's will. Where the soul is consecrated to God. the earthly life becomes a daily crucifying of the affections and lusts, so as to come ever more into harmony with God's will. This spiritual crucifixion is indeed the most lingering and painful death known to humanity, and yet when the spirit of filial love which animated Jesus becomes ours, in however humble a degree, we begin to conquer our lower nature. We perceive God's beautiful character of infinite love. We come more and more into harmony with God's transcending beauty through admiration and a longing desire that God would realise Himself in our souls. This desire, this love and admiration, saves, purifies, and fulfils love's atonement or attunement with God. We see then that the cross preaches the redemption of the soul and its deliverance from selfishness in order to live for others and for God, because love to both constrained us.

"The early Christians, whose thoughts were steeped in the Jewish or Rabbinical idea of literal bloody sacrifices as atonement for sins, and even those who followed Paul's allegorical teaching, in which he tried to unify the various conflicting theories of the coming Messiah's work—all these miss the beautiful. spiritual, and only true meaning of the atonement of Jesus on the cross to a Father of Love. It is by assimilating the beautiful spirit of Jesus, and by making spiritual sacrifices of self to God and spiritual atonement for others out of love to man and God, that the truth of the crucifixion is reached and will be operative in all time coming. The spiritual atonement means love's victory in the soul of man. is seen in the soul's reformation and consecration to God, based upon filial love; it is seen

in the brotherhood of man, based upon mutual love and true fellowship; it is seen in our likeness to the ideal Jesus in his beautiful character, principles, and purposes; it is seen, lastly, in our divine sonship in God with Jesus, whose home in glory we, too, shall share. There God's love and majesty will be seen in their meridian splendour, illuminating existence, colouring and vivifying all things with beauty, life, and joy, and this for evermore.

"Now, honoured Sahib, we must part, and probably for ever upon this earth, for to me it seems as if my end is near at hand. In parting, let me sketch the programme of reformed Christianity, which I shall call the 'Spiritual Gospel,' or, as you may prefer to call it, 'The Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty as seen in Jesus.' Anyhow, I will tell you what I believe is needed to be preached in India in order to convert it from Polytheism and idolatry to the faith of Jesus.

"The programme is as follows:-

"Preach the unity of God, His fatherhood, His love, His beauty, and His holiness. "Preach Jesus as God's ambassador to reveal God in His fulness.

"Preach man's sonship with God and his divinity.

"Preach that the world can be conquered only by truth and by unselfish love.

"Preach that sin's antidote is love; that sin springs from selfishness, and that only a higher love—love to God—can conquer the lower, selfish, animal life.

"Preach the law of Vicariousness, which saves the world, as seen in the death and crucifixion of Jesus. It is the secret of soul reformation, soul resurrection, and the soul's new birth into a higher life.

"Preach that in this faith and in this struggle we must engage, with a view to bringing the whole world under the sceptre of one God, the King of Love. Heaven shall thus be brought down to earth, and humanity shall be enthroned with Jesus in glory on High after earth's labours are ended.

"Preach that the life of true and endur-

ing love is best seen in the ideal Jesus on earth, that he is and ever will be heaven's highest ambassador of love to lead us to God and to reveal Him in His glory and beauty. The heart of humanity will ever be drawn in gratitude, admiration, and love towards Jesus for his mission upon earth; hence his spiritual rule as God's spokesman and leader of the human race will never cease. As a son of God and, as it were, the first-born of us all, we his brethren should strive to act upon the glorious principles by which he lived and died, and follow these whithersoever they lead us. The way we know is ever upwards to greater knowledge and wisdom, to a more abundant charity, a sublimer faith, a brighter hope, a more rapturous love in the coming eternity, where we shall meet him with rejoicing. There, with hearts overflowing with love, reverence, and adoration, we shall worship with him the one self-existent, eternal God, Creator and Upholder, the supreme Spirit of inexpressible power, wisdom, and omniscience; there we shall also with him see God in His inconceivable glory and majesty, and in His perfect beauty, infinite tenderness, and inexhaustible love. Therefore, may the mission of Jesus also triumph in India, by revealing His Father, as it has done in other lands: so that his God of Love, mercy, truth, and faithfulness may be worshipped by all on earth, as He is worshipped by all in heaven."

And now farewell, Chandra Tulse Ramana, dear departed soul. Thanks for thy glowing words in honour of God our heavenly Father, and for thy praise of Jesus, of whom thou hast heard so little in this life and yet whom thou lovest so much. Thou art now with Jesus within the veil, where the mystery of life, death, and eternity is solved for thee, and where the testimony of Jesus concerning God, His love and beauty, and our divine relation and sonship with Him for ever in love and joy, will be found to be the yea and amen of existence.

CHAPTER II

REFORMED CHRISTIANITY

THE last city I visited before returning from India was Bombay, where I stayed a couple of days. I took the opportunity of calling upon a bachelor friend, who had a charming bungalow on the Malabar Hill, with a splendid view of the city and the Indian Ocean. I was introduced to a noble-looking Hindu, who held a high position in the Government service, and who proved to be an amiable and cultured gentleman. He had read some of my works, and was desirous of making my personal acquaintance. During the evening we sat in the verandah and admired the sky with its unnumbered hosts of stars, which shone with a brilliancy unknown at home. It was a most enchanting vision. For a long time we sat in silence, until I noticed the constellation of the "Southern Cross," which sparkled likediamonds. I pointed it out to my two companions, and, after remarking on its beautiful appearance in the sky, I added that we never saw it in our Northern Hemisphere. The Hindu replied that he understood the name had been given to the constellation in honour of the cross of "Golgotha," where the Christian Avatar had suffered death in ages long past. And he added: "Is it not remarkable that the wooden cross on Calvary, as a symbol, has revolutionised the world, while the star-sparkling cross in yonder high heaven is of little interest to any one upon earth?" "Yes," said my friend, "it shows how the spiritual transcends the material. The one belongs to the creation of souls; the other is only part of the lower creation of matter." This led to an animated conversation, which lasted till the early hours of the morning, and the substance of which I shall now give you.

"Christianity in India" was our subject, and the Hindu handled it to me in an original and able manner. Whether the progressive party in the Christian Church at home or in India will by-and-by come to act upon the various suggestions remains to be seen. In any case, the discussion will show those who take an interest in the warfare of the Christian religion against lower stages of religious faith and civilisation what methods Hindu thinkers, best able to judge, and who are also favourable to the Christian religion, consider it necessary to adopt, in order to make Christianity a conquering force in the hearts of the various races of India.

As regards the preaching of the Gospel in India, his first remarks were practically the same as those to which the two speakers in Calcutta had given expression, but he had studied the subject from a different point of view.

To preach God—the unity of God, the personal God, the God of Love, mercy, and truth whom Jesus preached—this he also considered to be the first, the most pressing, the

most solemn duty incumbent on every Christian missionary who came to India amongst idolaters and Polytheists. To teach India the only true God, Creator, Upholder, Guide, and Father of the human family, irrespective of race, colour, or station in life—this he repeated should ever be the first trumpet-call in every land where Polytheism was rampant.

"Look," he said, "how the faith of the Mohammedans prospers in India. We know that at first their faith was promulgated chiefly by the sword, but for many centuries this carnal weapon has been laid aside, and their missionaries now rely upon their own enthusiasm and their strong appeals to truth and commonsense in persuading their hearers to accept the one merciful and righteous God of the Koran as the sole object of their faith and worship. Not only in India; but look also to the success which has followed them in Northern Africa, and during the last half century in Equatorial Africa, where their triumphs have been phenomenal, tribe after tribe having been converted to Mohammedanism. Consider also that in India, with a population of fully 300 million souls, the Mohammedans have since converted about 58 millions. The Christian sects, on the other hand, which began much earlier, say, in Southern India in the third century A.D., followed in the sixteenth century by the Roman Catholic propaganda and during the last two centuries by the Protestant missions, have only succeeded, after all their efforts, in gaining to their faith a total of a little over two millions. This is all the more noteworthy, when it is remembered that since the three leading castes would have nothing to do with the Christian faith, Church missions have been forced to fall back upon the most ignorant of the population, even upon those at the bottom of the social ladder, mostly outcasts from Hindu society. Indeed, those who live in India know that converts are most plentifully secured in times of famine, plague, and distress, when starvation drives men to leave their ancestral faith. At such times, also, the Christian missionaries adopt Hindu orphans and bring them

up in the Christian faith, and thus swell the number of converts. I say, further, that the small success is all the more to be wondered at, when we reflect that Christianity is the faith of the conquering nation, which stands behind the missionaries and indirectly, if not openly, gives them every assistance towards furthering their cause. Surely there is some potent reason for this truly lamentable state of affairs seen from a Christian standpoint, and I will aver, without fear of contradiction, that the comparative failure lies chiefly in the defective presentation of the Christian faith in a country like India. Great Britain has to realise that it must adapt the method of teaching its religious faith to changed circumstances. An ancient nation, which has enjoyed a high state of civilisation, with fixed religious systems and rules of life, which from experience suit it best, should be treated differently from a savage people with no civilisation whatever.

"My first advice, therefore, to Christian missionaries who come to India is, that they

should study beforehand the various religious systems of the Hindus and their philosophical and ethical codes, with the sincere desire of understanding the differences which keep them apart. They should try to draw the two great faiths together by tact, conciliation, and wisdom, instead of driving them further apart, as many are doing, by treating the Hindus with ill-disguised contempt and arrogance, as if the faith by which the nation has lived for millenniums, and which has produced beautiful and saintly lives of men and women, were far beneath their own superlative learning. Surely the missionaries ought to show a sympathetic interest and impartiality, as Jesus did, who praised where praise was due, even although found in an alien faith. In short, Christian missionaries should try to transform Hinduism by gladly welcoming everything good and true in it, and incorporating with it from Christianity whatever they find to be superior to the Hindu faith.

"Secondly. The Christian missionaries must change their methods in the presence of polytheistic worshippers. They should preach the Unity of the Godhead with the Fatherhood of God as their first article of faith. Believe me, and I speak as an impartial observer, both idolatry and Polytheism can be overthrown only by earnest and passionate appeals to the head and heart of India's teeming myriads, and by pressing upon them the claims of one God—the God Almighty, revealed by Jesus as the sole object of their worship. This alone will overthrow the Goliath which still defies Christianity in India.

"Thirdly. Let me now take a further step, which you may call revolutionary, but which I believe to be necessary for the success of a religion whose claim is, that it is founded upon truth. You must not hope to establish Christianity by an appeal to a single miracle recorded in the Bible, as evidence or confirmation of the truth. Remember that India worships several millions of deities, every one of whom Jesus, as an ardent Monotheist, wishes to see overthrown, in order to substitute his own faith in one God, the heavenly Father,

as the sole object of love, adoration, and worship. You must also bear in mind how careful Jesus was on all occasions to impress upon his hearers that God was truth; and hence his teaching was based upon truth as he saw it.

"In facing the question of miracles, we should remember the natural history of all religions. As these passed through their rudimentary stage, the worshippers, ignorant of the laws of Nature, but possessed of vivid imaginations, believed themselves surrounded by supernatural agencies, so that miracles to them were part of their normal existence and looked upon as its true explanation. Everything not understood was generally treated as a miracle. The difficulty with them was to decide by whose agency these wonders or miracles were performed, whether by demoniacal or by friendly powers. Therefore, around any event out of the common there soon crystallised miraculous stories, arising from reason seeking a cause for everything, arising also from their love of the marvellous, the romantic, and the

supernatural. The same tendency may be seen to this day in India, where most of the lower classes readily believe all kinds of miracles, including such as are related in the Bible, which they think could be easily performed by their own exorcists. Nineteen hundred years ago the same factors were in full operation all over the Roman Empire, and apparently to an even greater extent than in India. It is therefore the strongest proof that the events described were penned in a superstitious age. Signs, wonders, and miracles were firmly believed in by high and low, and always looked for to establish any special claims; and if they were not forthcoming, they were conceived by vivid imaginations or during so-called trances, which claimed implicit belief from high and low.

"But let me proceed. I would divide the work of the Christian missionaries into four outstanding parts:—

"1st. Preach the unity and fatherhood of God, as interpreted by Jesus.

"2nd. Preach the divinity of man and sonship with God, as taught by Jesus.

- "3rd. Preach by living the beautiful life as a son of God, following close in the steps of Jesus.
- "4th. Preach the *spiritual* Gospel, freed from miraculous elements and other erroneous teaching.

As a Hindu, with a warm interest in the Christian faith, I recommend this latter suggestion for the following additional reasons:—

"Among educated Hindus, the usual presentation of the Gospel by your missionaries is not adapted to win them over to Christianity, for the memoirs of Jesus are full of miracles and wonders, which are said to have accompanied his conception, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Now, we educated Hindus, who are sceptical (and I think rightly so) about the miraculous stories found in our own scriptures, and which we therefore have dismissed as improbable and legendary, are forced to treat the miracles of the Christian Bible in the same way. It is not likely that we will believe your miracles when we do not give credence to our own. I am convinced

that the rejection of them is justified, for they are practically identical with the reported miracles of the divine conception, birth, life, death, and ascension of two of our most famous Avatars—namely, Buddha and Krishna. Seeing that these two divinities had their memoirs written, the former certainly some centuries before Jesus was born, we naturally conclude that the Gospel miracles have been to a very great extent derived, perhaps indirectly, from our own Hindu, and especially the Buddhist, scriptures. I am told that in ancient Persia, Greece, and Egypt similar miraculous stories are also met with, all apparently drawn from the ancient sun-worship.

"The conclusion, therefore, which we have come to is fortified, when history shows us that Buddhist missionaries two or three centuries before Jesus was born were spread over the greater part of the ancient world to convert it to the faith of Buddha, or at least to inculcate among all people his gentle, forgiving spirit. In the course of their wanderings, we know that these Indian missionaries reached

Judea, and even Egypt. That Buddhism had actually been planted in the dominions of the Seleucidea and the Ptolemies (Palestine belonging to the former before the third century B.C.) is no modern guesswork or a theory, but is proved by a passage in the Edicts of King Asoka. These edicts were engraved on a rock at Girnur in Guzerat about 257 B.C., and receive confirmation from the works of Hindu and other writers of those early ages. The peaceful doctrines of sympathy, purity, charity, and self-control taught by these missionaries spread rapidly in Palestine. Flourishing monastic settlements were formed there and elsewhere, to which large numbers of devout souls flocked for instruction in their lofty doctrines of a holy life. Some of the Jewish hermit settlements, which had in part adopted Buddha's beautiful tenets, also became well known in the century when Jesus lived. The members were known as 'Perfectionists,' i.e. Jews fulfilling the law in spirit and in truth, apart from ceremonialism or sacrificial ordinances of blood and intercessions; to which the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and the greater part of the nation clung tenaciously as Divine ordinances and infallible truths of the utmost importance in the religious life—although Jesus, as an Essene, with many others, thought otherwise.

"As regards Jesus' own life, everything points to the belief, as expounded so fully in our friend's lately published work, 'Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship,' that he was trained for years in one of these religious seminaries of the unorthodox Jews, along with many other young and ardent souls, dissatisfied with the condition of their country in the grasp of Rome and with the corruption that was rampant in the Church. By comparing the teaching of Jesus with that of the 'Perfectionists,' it is seen that both have the same beautiful spirit of self-renunciation, peace, purity, and heavenly-mindedness. In other respects Jesus never quitted the strong faith of his father and mother in Monotheism, which throughout his whole life remained the anchor of his faith and practice, and which gave him inspiration and strong support even to his dying hour—'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'

"As to the religious Order of which Jesus appears to have been a member, it has been pointed out that abstinence from marriage formed part of their asceticism, along with renunciation of all worldly possessions and conquest over the passions. The discipline of the Order was more severe than that of the Pharisees or of the Sadducees, for, besides the above rules, there were enjoined the cultivation of inward or spiritual purity, the banishment of anger, the possession of a meek and lowly spirit, and a strict adherence to truth in speech and action. They put little stress on ritual, but emphasised inward and constant communion with God Himself. They cultivated likewise a principle of brotherhood, and sought to realise a better social order in everyday life by spiritual as opposed to carnal methods. In all these matters, one cannot fail to notice a striking agreement with the recorded teaching of Jesus. In fact, the

Sermon on the Mount is practically a summary of Essenism. Jesus therefore brought into the market-place what the others had long before believed, taught, and practised in their respective retreats.

"I have now pointed out the similarity between the life and teaching of the Essenes, most of whom had retired from the world, and the teaching of Jesus as known to us. Let me explain further by saying that the likeness is seen mainly in their chief doctrines of faith, in their allegorical interpretation of the Old Scriptures, in their social and religious customs, in their acts of healing, in their power of exorcism, which drove out evil spirits and enabled them to perform reputed miracles, in their vows of poverty, in their aspiration after a holy life, and, lastly, in their looking for the advent of a divine redeemer upon earth to erect an inward and spiritual kingdom in the souls of men. This last aspiration was in sharp contrast to the hopes of patriotic Jews, both lay and clerical, who looked for an earthly conqueror to overthrow

the Roman power and exalt the Jewish priest-hood.

"Many of the early converts to the new sect founded by Jesus were naturally drawn from this religious Order of holy brotherhood throughout Judea. Jesus himself had been a member of it, and his teaching closely resembled that in which they had themselves been brought up. Those disciples would, doubtless, also be well acquainted with the apocryphal stories from India, which they had learned from the 'Vanaprasthas' (dwellers in the forests) or, as they were called in Egypt and elsewhere, 'Gymnosophists' (scantily clad wise men from the East) who were dwelling among them. When contributing, therefore, their quota to the earliest memoirs of Jesus (for part of the Gospels we may believe to have been originally sketched in several of these Essene retreats), it would appear that his disciples included the miraculous birth-stories, &c., of former Indian Avatars, as being applicable to their departed brother. In him they realised that the spirit of Buddha had

taken up its abode, his cause they had espoused as having been to them the 26th Avatar or divine incarnation, and for him they had been looking, along with the Essenes, and always in a spiritual aspect. Buddha prophesied that in 500 years a new Buddha would appear, whom he called the 'Buddha of brotherly love' (Maitreva). As Buddha died 470 B.C., the time had arrived for the appearance of the new Avatar. This must have influenced the belief of the Essenes, taught by the wise men from the East who dwelt among them, that Jesus was the 'Maitreya,' and hence they gave him their homage as described above. The logia or memoirs would at first be written down by them or others as reminiscences, without pretence to literary workmanship. following generations these were worked up by scholars, who used their discretion in adding to the memoirs or in throwing out unsuitable material. Some of the latter still remains in the apocryphal Gospels.

"I may be wrong in these surmises, but it is not of very great importance, as the coinci-

dences might have been drawn from other countries, such as ancient Persia or Greece, instead of from ancient India, for they all had similar miraculous stories based upon solar myths. In any case, whatever assistance the miracles in the Bible have given to the spread of Christianity by exalting and glorifying Jesus, and thereby enabling the Church to convert a generation which sought for signs and wonders before it would believe: here, in India, the Gospel miracles have had an opposite effect among educated natives. They have come to be a hindrance to the spread and acceptance of the Gospels. Our position can be easily understood. We have plenty of these miracles, quite as credible, and even more striking, so do not require yours; besides, we see at once that they are plagiarism from our own or from other ancient scriptures. More than this, in my opinion these miracles are no longer required for the spread of the Gospel. They are, in fact, stumbling-blocks. Jesus, we know, wished to build upon truth, and as I believe that miracles are not truth, they ought therefore, in my opinion, and others like-minded, to be dispensed with. Believe me, the Christian religion would vastly benefit thereby. Truth needs for its support no pious deception, either spoken or acted or acquiesced in. We must never lose faith in the self-sustaining power of truth. Therefore the new theology in Europe, of which I have heard, is ignoring as much as possible, for propaganda purposes, the miraculous part of the Gospels. Indeed, the whole scheme of Church doctrine, which in the Church councils of the early ages was supposed to have been settled for all time coming, has become discredited through the critical examination of the sacred writings during the last half century.

"If this is the case in Europe, how much more is it here, where your Bible has never taken deep root? I am sure you will sympathise with the position which we take up. Here, in India, Europeans have taught us to disbelieve and despise the miraculous and supernatural portions of our own scriptures, as pious frauds, produced by superstition or a heated imagination. At the same time, they

have taught us, and quite rightly, to look upon the universe as always and everywhere the realm of uniform laws. There is no caprice, no rivalry, between God and Nature, no diabolical agency; everything moves in majestic order and regularity. Miracles or supernatural stories found in ancient sacred scriptures are quite impossible of proof, and the critical intellect of modern times, trained in scientific methods and convinced of the uniformity of Nature's laws, instinctively revolts against them. Of course, nothing short of omniscience could safely venture to declare that miracles are impossible; but this is not the point. As civilisation advances and the laws of Nature are better understood, the belief in miracles gradually disappears. Experience shows that they thrive and multiply only in the darkness or the twilight of ignorance and superstition. This is amply demonstrated from the stream of reported miracles in Pagan, Indian, Jewish, and Christian records. They have all fallen into disrepute in the light of modern research and civilisation."

Our host here interposed, and said: "It certainly looks as if miracles were doomed from the advance of civilisation and the critical spirit of inquiry, and this as regards both ancient and modern miracles. Even those recorded from Lourdes have little or no significance. The reported healings refer only to a limited class of diseases, which spring mainly from nervous derangements, and which can be cured or relieved without resorting to so-called miraculous interventions. But tell me, please, what will remain of the Gospels if you expunge all the miracles, and what will be left of the old theology, built to a great extent upon these marvels, which were thought at one time to be fundamentals?"

The Hindu replied: "I have often put the same question to myself, and I think we must look for a solution in some such way as this: The life of Jesus must be studied from three points of view:—

- "There is first, the historical Jesus.
- "There is secondly, the legendary Jesus.
- "There is thirdly, the ideal Jesus.

It is impossible now to separate these critically, for they have been so interwoven in the revised and amended gospels during the first three centuries.

"Shortly stated, from the first aspect, we need to be satisfied that we have before us a singularly beautiful spirit, overflowing with divine love and enthusiasm for God and humanity, who had seen further and probed deeper than any of his contemporaries into the secret of a happy and truly religious life. This he declared to be based upon love and service to God and man. We should love humanity since we were all brethren; we should be willing to make sacrifices for each other's welfare, and even to lay down our lives, if need be, to save the perishing. We thus glorify God and become like Him, whose essence is 'selfsacrificing love.' In studying the Gospel, we can only admit any reported events as being true of the historical Jesus, if they illuminate and reflect the beautiful spirit in which he lived and died. If we find, for instance, that a story has been admitted where Jesus cursed a fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season, we may put this aside as false, and so with any other event or miracle which cannot be reconciled with our conception of his compassionate, helpful, and truth-loving spirit.

"As to the legendary Jesus, you must not for a moment think that I would recommend this aspect to be left out. On the contrary, we must take the legends as the 'poetry of the Gospel,' beautiful symbols denoting in outward lineament the spiritual effect of his life and teaching. In this sense each recorded miracle has its moral and spiritual significance, each has a lesson for us to take to heart. In this light the miracles and supernatural events are beautiful. We see in them the fine homage of loving, devoted souls, desiring to glorify and raise Jesus to the highest point of honour in the eyes of all believers. This is not the place in which to develop and illustrate this idea, but I recommend you to study the question from this point of view at your leisure. I am sure it will repay you the labour involved.

"Lastly, we have to look at the ideal Jesus of the Gospel, not the public or teaching work done by him, nor the halo painted by admirers in his honour, but his secret life, his aspirations, and the longings of his soul, as the ideal of life, which he held before himself and others. The Author of the fourth Gospel, whoever he was, was a philosophical and literary writer of great ability, well versed in the wisdom of his age. He appears to have been singularly fortunate in many portions of his record, especially towards the close, in unfolding from reminiscences of the reported sayings of Jesus his aspirations and soul conflicts, and in presenting these in his own matchless style. Exception may be taken to his having adopted the well-known Alexandrian theory of the Logos, and applied it to the ideal Jesus, as the spiritual Messiah sent from heaven in accordance with the expectations of many of the Essenes and other devout Jews. This Logos was a kind of 'metaphysical' Messiah, believed (as the first-born) to stand between Jehovah and humanity. Thus

the author transferred the conception of a spiritual mediator to the ideal Jesus, and the same conception prevails in Hindu philosophical thought. Vishni is also the firstborn of Brahm, and stands between Him and the world as its protector and saviour. So you see how much alike the world is, after all, in its religious conceptions; and if priority is to be claimed for the Logos theory, I should certainly claim it for India, as it was known here long before it was known in Egypt or elsewhere. Let this be, however, as it may. The author who wrote the fourth Gospel, under the pseudonym of John, must have drunk deeply of the spirit of Jesus before he could have portrayed his Master's inmost thoughts and aspirations as he has conceived them. He has indeed produced a beautiful and touching monument to the honour of his Master and Saviour. It has been dear to all devout and admiring souls, and will doubtless always be precious to humanity.

"Let me sum up the revelation of the

spiritual life of Jesus as described in this Gospel:—

"Jesus saw God in His infinite beauty of perfection; saw Him as his and our father of love and pity; saw his own and our divinity and sonship with God; saw love, truth, and beauty as the mainsprings of existence in the spiritual realm; saw how the divine life was founded upon sacrifice and vicariousness. Therefore with a heart overflowing with love he presented himself as love's sacrifice and as love's ministrant to do his beloved, heavenly Father's will, when, where, and how, as love might ordain.

"Now, I am done, and the midnight hour is near. You will thus understand, I hope, why I have recommended that only the spiritual aspect of the Gospel should be preached in India.

"Such a Gospel would be the repository of spiritual truths, suitable for all ages, for all lands, and for all worshippers, to lead them to a monotheistic faith. The miraculous element should serve only as poetic illustrations of divine truths, and not be regarded as having actually taken place. Christianity thus introduced as plain unvarnished truth, will be seen in its full beauty and persuasiveness in sharp contrast to the imaginative and mythological scriptures in which the Hindus have hitherto placed their implicit trust. The entrance into India of the simple faith of Jesus will thereby be made easier, and Christian missions will convey to their converts only what contains eternal truth, in harmony with all that is beautiful, pure, just, and elevating. Christianity in its simplicity and engaging truthfulness and beauty will be freed:

- "1st. From a false conception of the Trinity.
- "2nd. From ancient legends, miracles, and supernatural events.
- "3rd. From unworthy views of God and false views of humanity.

"This nobler faith, I am sure, will come nearer Jesus' own conception of the religious reformation which he tried to effect, namely, 'A monotheistic religion of spiritual beauty,

Love, and Truth," best illustrated for us by his own life and sublime devotion, by his sacrifices, healings, and death—a glorious example, a revelation of God's innermost nature, character, and perfection. Thus in ages to come, if not in our age, will arise in its glorious beauty and attraction the universal religion of humanity, founded upon the living truth of the consecrated life as seen in Jesus. For the ideal of Jesus must be found in all higher religious systems before the soul of man can be in tune with the Infinite, which is the spirit of perfect love and beauty; and with all truth-seeking souls of every nation, race, and colour, longing for the kingdom of beauty, love, and truth. Of this glorious and spiritual kingdom, the despised, crucified Jesus shall be the chosen King-chosen by the acclaims of all loving, admiring souls; chosen, not only for this short earthly life, but for the joyous realms above, where happiness, full and overflowing, shall fill our hearts for evermore."

CHAPTER III

INFALLIBILITY

Next day being a public holiday in Bombay, my friends had full leisure; and the weather being unbearably hot, except in the shadow of the house, we decided to stay at home. I was pleased at the prospect of spending my last day in Bombay in such delightful company.

We both thanked our excellent Hindu friend for his interesting and soul-stirring remarks of the previous evening. Our host added however, that in Scotland he had been taught the doctrine of the "infallibility of the Bible," every word of which was considered as God's own word communicated to mankind. He believed that this dogma was dear to all Protestants, and that it had saved them from

the yoke of the Catholic Church. The reformation had taught Protestants to find in Scripture the only authority for their beliefs, and in doing so had exposed the gross errors and impious claims of the Catholic priesthood. He was anxious, therefore, to hear what modern theology had to say that could induce him to move from the old anchorage.

Our Hindu friend smiled, and replied in his own persuasive way: "In a certain sense you are quite right. There is infallibility, but the difficult thing is to know where to find it. Some Christian sects believe that infallible truth is to be found only in the Church to which they belong. Others pin their faith to an eternal and infallible priesthood. While a third sect ignores or condemns the claims both of churches and of priests, and places its entire confidence in the infallibility of the Bible. This is also the attitude of Hindu worshippers in regard to their own scriptures, the 153,826 words of the Rig-Veda being reverently received by them as infallibly from God. Now, where is truth to be found in these conflicting

claims? So far as I understand, you reject the two first, but as a Protestant you admit the third claim to infallibility. I can well understand your desire to cling to something of a divine nature as being infallible, for without this who can tell authoritatively the truth about God, the soul, and the mystery of our present and future existence? Surely infallibility must be found somewhere to guide humanity to truth, and the weary, seeking soul to that perfect rest and happiness which it is so earnestly in quest of. Yes, the soul of man longs to know where infallibility may be found for itself. We find infallibility, for instance, in the laws of Nature, which are unchanged, always and everywhere reliable. We also find infallibility in divine things. The laws of the moral and spiritual cosmos are as invariable and as infallible as these we see at work in Nature. If you ask, therefore, where the soul of man can find infallibility concerning itself for this life and the life to come, I answer, in the same way as Jesus did: by applying the touchstone of God's own

spiritual principles whereby He rules the world.

"These divine laws rule in the spiritual cosmos, and upon them alone can true religion and the guidance of life be founded. The principles which are based upon Truth, Love, Beauty, and Justice, which are the essence of God's own character, infallibly determine for us what is Heaven's truth in spiritual matters. This cluster of divine graces is the spiritual polestar by which we may safely guide ourselves and find the truth through life and through death."

"Well," said our host, "can you give a concrete example from the Bible to bring your argument home to us?"

After a short pause he replied: "When you read that the last words of Jesus when bidding an affectionate farewell to his disciples were, 'He that believeth not shall be damned,' you may rest assured that the Bible has not given you the infallible truth uttered by Jesus. The saying is an interpolation by some fanatical scribe whom Jesus would have

disowned in the words of that other passage: 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ve are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them' (Luke ix. 55-56). In both cases, that which determines whether such statements are true or not, arises from the knowledge which Jesus has imparted of God's true character. It would be a libel upon God to regard the first statement as an infallible truth. The revised Bible must therefore exclude all such statements which are now seen to dishonour God, Jesus, and humanity. I grant that infallible truth is found in all churches, as well as in every priesthood and in every sacred book or Bible, but it is more or less mixed with gross errors and debased views of God and His government of the world. If you wish to find infallibility, you can only succeed by applying the touchstone of Jesus by which he himself acted and judged.

"This leads me to say that the ancient citadel called an 'infallible Bible' is found in modern times to contain both truth and error. It is therefore the privilege and the duty of devoted

labourers in the field of critical theology to undertake the separation, and a difficult task it will prove to do it successfully. never be done by the conservative party, the 'let things alone party,' as the bulk of the priesthood has been in all ages. Indeed, you cannot expect them to move in the matter. Like the Brahmans, their faces, as a rule, are turned towards the past. They remain unmoved, because they think it to be their duty to defend 'what was once delivered to the saints' as containing infallible truth. We may consider them mistaken, but their attitude is consistent from their point of view. An exception may perhaps be made in regard to the Presbyterian churches in Scotland, which I hear praised on all hands, as being endued with a sturdy spirit of independence and a desire to find the truth at all hazards. this they follow the example of Jesus, to whom nothing was more sacred than truth. must therefore not take things for granted, because they are ancient; but knowing how humanity has emerged from ages of super-

stition, it behoves us to act in the spirit of Jesus and to subject everything presented for our acceptance in religious matters to an honest criticism with all the light our age can give. These free churches in your country, I understand, are not subject to oppressive State control or ecclesiastical despotism hampering the expression of their full convictions, if at any time they see reason to change their opinions on scriptural points. Such forces are wanted nowadays to bring about the new reformation and complete the work that Luther and other reformers started. Therefore, let us hope that Scotland will have the honour to be the pioneer of the new movement and carry it out successfully. Their forefathers fought for civil and religious freedom and gained it. Let these brave sons of brave sires come forward and claim freedom of progress in life and thought, and pursue it in the spirit of a fearless faith-loyal to truth wherever it leads them, to the revelation of God in Nature, or in history, or in sacred literature. By their researches, by their open

vision, by their judicious spirit and wisdom, they will obtain a deeper insight into truth and a wider and brighter outlook on the destiny of man. The modern scientist is not afraid to proclaim any truths he may find in Nature or in any branch of secular learning. Let these be ever so opposed to received opinions, the bugbear of infallibility does not hamper him. All honour therefore to intrepid searchers after truth in sacred matters, who are not deterred by fear of censure or of ostracism from investigating doctrines enshrined in a volume of miscellaneous writings—formerly, but erroneously, believed to be infallible.

"Indeed, only now after many centuries do you in the West see the wisdom of the Hindus, who in ages long past made science, philosophy, and religion sacred alike, but open to criticism. Freedom was sacred, and is so still in all these departments of thought. Why not follow our example if you wish to transplant Christianity to India? This is all I require to say on the infallibility

of your sacred Scriptures, and would leave the subject with these words: Bring every statement before the bar of reason and the truth-searching spirit which animated Jesus. Remember that the world longs for truth in religious matter. Truth gives peace of mind; it gives light, it gives true felicity."

Our host listened attentively, and said: "You have indeed cleared up this question of infallibility for me. From your account of the formation and slow growth of the Gospels, it would appear that these memoirs are mostly a collection of verbal reports, some of which are indeed correctly reported, whilst others are quite unreliable or purely imaginative. They appear to have been partly suggested by tradition from Buddhistic or other Pagan legends and teaching, as well as from short sayings and reports of the doings and sayings of Jesus committed to writing and circulated after his death; also from types or prophecies in the Old Testament which were supposed to relate to the Messiah, and for the illustration

of which incidents appear sometimes to have been inserted. I understand that it was fully three centuries later (say 325 A.D.) before the great Council of Nice, followed by other Councils, established the four canonical gospels, but the way in which the selection was made is not calculated to inspire confidence in its judgment or wisdom. Nor can one affirm that it has separated the true from the false in these ancient collections, for there are proofs that both the Gospels and the Epistles were added to and altered from time to time during these centuries before the canon was finally settled. Thus the infallibility of the Bible naturally disappears, and only the touchstone of divine principles can determine what should be retained as true, what should be considered doubtful, and what should be rejected. If ever we see the revised Bible of the sifted truth from Genesis to Revelation, it will unquestionably be in much smaller compass than our Bible occupies at present. The same remark applies to the reconstructed creed, which might be summed up

in three short articles of belief, both for pew and pulpit:—

- "'I believe in the Fatherhood of God.'
- "'I believe in the brotherhood of man.'
- "'I believe in living the life of love, as Jesus lived it, towards God and man.'

"In this short and comprehensive creed 'Love' is made the sole motive, for indeed everything is truly interpreted and finds its full fruition in and through 'Love.' If this short creed were acted upon, Heaven would come down to earth and the prophet's vision of millenniums of love and happiness would be realised at last. The Bible is now seen to be a very human document indeed, full of dogmatic assumptions. It is seen to be not a book of supernatural authority, nor written by miraculously inspired men. It is not infallible as a treasury of fact or as a rule of practice, and it must be tested by the divine touchstone of God's perfection before it can be binding upon us. You see, therefore, that Christians should find infallibility only in the divine principles of truth, beauty, love,

mercy, justice, and others of God's spiritual perfections. We need nothing more as a touchstone for the separation of truth from error. It might be put in the following practical way. If we wish for certainty in the decision of any spiritual difficulty, let us be guided by watching the effects of these If they make men more like principles. God in His beautiful and lovable character. more truthful, more conscientious, more full of pity, mercy, and helpfulness to others, more in communion with God and more anxious to do His will in everything, then we have fruits to show that they come from God and are infallible truths at all times and in all places. Another thought occurs to me, and it is this. Seeing that to Jesus truth was precious, and that he wished us to search for it as for hidden treasure, it is plain that in humanity truth must be progressive; hence we must never sit down content, thinking that we have reached perfection and that nothing stretches beyond needful for us to learn. On the contrary, we must always strive to widen

the horizon of our knowledge, and have a closer communion with God and with choice souls on earth whom we may happen to meet, either personally or through their writings. If we are imbued with this spirit of progress, this ambition for perfection, we shall be more ready to discard old customs and beliefs if the new are actually found better than the old. Upon this our modern civilisation is based, and it has answered splendidly. Look how the whole modern world has benefited by the open, eager vision, as compared with the stagnation of the East and the moribund condition of antiquated faiths. The present world-conception is that of an evolutionary universe; and if they are to prosper and bless mankind, the churches of Christendom must also advance. In this way we reach a higher, broader, more helpful and more spiritual view of humanity. We find ourselves part of a mighty fellowship of love and service, ever progressing in knowledge to the uplifting and ennobling of the world. It is a blessed lifetheory and a blessed life-practice, that all

should be busy in this little school of preparation for the life unending, still pursuing truth and developing every faculty to greater perfection, trying also to be more fruitful channels of usefulness and of happiness to others. In thus living we will become more like Jesus, as he reflected God's perfection and attractive beauty in his own life. In this lies our true happiness for all time."

CHAPTER IV

THE BEAUTIFUL

AFTER tiffin we settled down again in order to discuss another subject which was near my heart, and towards which our able Hindu friend might give me some valuable suggestions. I asked him how Christianity might best win its way in India, so as to represent the monotheistic religion of spiritual beauty which I advocated, and to which I knew he also leaned with considerable favour. In what follows I shall give you the outline of his answer, which may be of interest to the Christian churches both in India and at home.

"Well," he said, "let us first agree as to what you really mean by that novel expression. Of course, your first object is to base the

world's religions upon 'Monotheism,' the worship of one God only, and in this I heartily agree with you. The experience of all attempts at formulating religious dogmas has abundantly proved that Monotheism is the only true foundation to build upon. Nothing higher or better than this can take its place. Here humanity has reached *finality*.

"The second object which I understand you have set before you, is to explain Monotheism on the lines laid down by Jesus. This has proved to be the world's highest and truest conception, and is based upon the 'Fatherhood of God.' The conceptions of the Zoroastrians, of the Jews and of the Mohammedans, although grand and elevating to a certain extent, must all pale beside the glorious declaration of Jesus, for they are without that element of 'love in perfection' which makes the God whom Jesus conceived so lovable, so adorable to worship and admire. Through this belief in the 'Fatherhood of God' the world's progress in true sonship and likeness to God in His beautiful character can alone be fully accomplished, for by this alone are new motives ingrafted. In other words, more potent incentives come home to the heart and to the conscience, and come with a force and an appeal which cannot be felt to the same extent, or in the same intensity, in any lower form of religion. Hence, in this second aspect, humanity has also reached *finality*. Nothing higher or better can be conceived than this, that the essence of God's character and perfection is seen as 'self-sacrificing love for humanity, a love dimly compared to that of a father's towards his children.'

"Let us now advance a step further and emphasise that the *third* object arising out of the foregoing is to proclaim that God's infinite perfections are best summed up, as far as we can conceive them from this little earthly vantage ground, in the one word: 'Beautiful.' This expression sums up everything. It includes God's holiness, majesty, wisdom, justice, love, mercy, truth, and lovingkindness. All these separately, and in their essence, are rays

of infinite beauty, streaming from the only source of life and being; and hence, I quite agree with you that the totality of God's perfections and graces can have no better expression than in the words: 'The Beautiful.' Here again humanity sees *finality* in its conception of God, in His essence, in His character, and in His mighty, all-wise, beneficent rule. Beauty, harmony, loveliness, beneficence meet us everywhere in the world within and in the world without; and we may be certain that in the world-transcendent everything will also bear the seal of God's own beauty.

"The fourth object which necessarily flows from the foregoing is that, God Himself being our pattern, we must aim at growing into God's beauty if we wish to reach the everlasting honour of becoming like Him. Here is an unlimited field for our highest aspirations, and the only ambition worthy of an immortal soul. Every step forward makes us more attractive and more beautiful to God and the sentient universe, a beauty which is our ever-

lasting portion. Spiritual beauty, spiritual health, and spiritual happiness go hand in hand. This is not the work of a day, it is a life's work. As the sculptor forms the beautiful statue, with eyes constantly fixed upon the original before him: in like manner the soul evolves the beautiful traits in its character, the lofty principles, the active, unselfish life, the passive graces, the love which feels for every one, and the love which ever soars upwards to commune with Him who is altogether beautiful, and is filled with fresh enthusiasm, courage, and consecration. All these spiritual graces and beauties are the results of a lifetime, of constant watchfulness and warfare against our lower nature, whose tendency ever is to draw us downwards, and against our grovelling and grasping life. Many names may be given to this spiritual and aspiring life on earth, based upon God's own beautiful and sublime life, but I agree with you that the expression 'the life beautiful' is the most appropriate we can use. Let us therefore look upon this fourth aspect also as the soul's *finality*, at least in this world. Such a life, in spite of all its shortcomings and imperfections, is a useful, blessed, noble, and beautiful life. As the scented rose spreads its fragrance far and wide, and does not keep its aroma to itself, so a beautiful character will radiate its blissful and joy-giving influences to others and become a blessing and a consolation to many a weary and desponding soul.

"Again, look away from the individual and observe how the spirit of Jesus has created the longing for the 'beautiful' in modern life. He would rejoice over this if he were now on earth, for it gives expression to his own desire to make others better and healthier and happier. As you have said in one of your books, 'How delightful it is to live in a peaceful, well-governed land where Godloving, God-admiring people dwell, conscientious, charitable, and upright in all their thoughts and acts. And still more delightful, when along with this the silence is broken by the laughter of innocent little ones at

their play. These are factors which make life and home beautiful.'

"Furthermore, the altruistic spirit of Jesus in our modern world is making itself felt on all sides in agitating for the improvement of life and its environment. Wretched hovels, insanitary dwellings where men and women and innocent children are forced to live and become demoralised, are now being pulled down in order to make houses more sanitary, more comfortable, and even beautiful. Towns are being improved in every way; garden cities are being laid out; parks and gardens are being provided for the multitude to invigorate both body and mind. People are also beginning to live the simple life. Their creed of plain living and high thinking makes them an inspiration and a help to others. All this is praiseworthy and healthgiving for young and old. Let us remember, however, that no scheme of social reform can be effective or of permanent value unless it is supplemented by the spiritual mission of Jesus, whose end and aim is the glory of God. Altruism bereft

of the religious motive to love of God, engenders self-seeking and materialism. In short, social service and social reform need the stimulus of religious enthusiasm and love to God and man."

CHAPTER V

THE FUTURE OF INDIA

"I HAVE now," he continued, "in my own leisurely way examined the designation which you have given to the mission of Jesus upon earth, namely, that of 'the monotheistic religion of spiritual beauty,' and I think you are amply justified in having given it this name. And now, you wish me to answer your previous question as to how Christianity may best win its way in India—

"1st. As a monotheistic faith; and

"2nd. As a system of spiritual beauty, because lived in the love-spirit of Jesus.

"I have already given you my views as to the Christian faith and the reforms that are required, so far as India is concerned. I shall

now be as explicit as regards the Hindu faith, and how it may be harmonised with the monotheistic faith of Jesus. At first sight the problem seems impossible, but one must distinguish between the faith of the educated classes and that of the lower castes. The former are the most important to reconcile. Where the Brahmans go the multitude follows, just as in the beehive when the queen is secured the swarm soon accompanies her. As regards modern Hinduism, while Polytheism is rampant among the multitude, the higher classes are in a sense monotheistic and glory in being so above all other nations. Indeed, they are the earliest and most consistent Monotheists. For them, besides Brahm, nothing exists. God is one, God is all. This conception, however, refers to God only in His transcendency. In this aspect, the Hindus are quite right in the doctrine, derived originally from the Upanishads, that Brahm (neuter) is absolute, incomprehensible, ineffable, passionless, the source of all being. Yet the very highest conception we

are capable of forming is inadequate and is merely a symbol of the Infinite. This is not materialism. On the contrary, it is a deeply spiritual doctrine, and in its aspect of transcendency must ever be true for humanity in this world. I am quite sure that Jesus himself would have subscribed to it. You may, if you choose, call it Pantheism or Agnosticism, but it is a conception of God in one aspect of His being which the human mind is forced to form, and no one has evolved it better than the authors of the Upanishads.

"As the Hindus have the credit of first formulating the conception of God in His 'abstract' aspect or transcendency, so the earliest of their race, as my friend reminds me, the ancient Aryans, were also in their original settlements Monotheists in a 'personal' aspect. This conception was in advance of those held by other ancient races of Asia, for as far as known the Aryans were the first to conceive God under the 'personal' aspect. It is interesting to observe that Jesus in fixing

upon the personal aspect of God, called Him precisely by the same name as the ancient Aryans had done, namely, 'Dyaus Pitar,' i.e. 'Our Father in Heaven.' The Hindus ought therefore to love and believe in this utterance of Jesus and adopt it in their creed, seeing it has a Hindu origin and has revolutionised the world. They must also confess, that besides the aspect of God's transcendency which fills the soul with awe and wonder, there is another, a more helpful and loving aspect, that of God as 'Our Father in Heaven.' The late Max Müller has truly said: 'The ancestors of the Hindus had once the same supreme Deity under exactly the same name, a name which meant "Heaven Father." Indeed, God is rightly called so, because we derive our being from Him. He supports us as a father supports his children, and He bears a father's love towards us. Yet God in His fulness transcends our loftiest conceptions.'

"In this aspect the Hindus find the personal, moral Ruler of the universe, the creator full of love, pity, and mercy, and everything desir-

able that appeals to the heart and the emotions. While the Hindus have the credit of their ancestors being among some of the earliest nations in the world to realise 'God's Fatherhood,' the truth was unfortunately lost during the conquest of India. It was rediscovered and placed in its proper setting by the Essenes, and preached to the world, more especially by their famous disciple Jesus-not merely as a pious exclamation, but as the central truth of their religious faith, around which all else revolved. Therefore, let India claim as its own the faith in God as a 'Father.' Besides Brahm's transcendency, the Hindus must also as true Aryans recognise Brahm's supra-personality in His 'Fatherhood.' The argument drawn from this conception by Jesus is irresistible; God with a father's heart, possessed of perfect love and beauty, desires each of His children to be partakers of His divine nature with the glory of separate personal consciousness. They are thus destined for a sublime, never-ending development towards perfection in spiritual

beauty and moral dignity, filled with adoring love towards God and fraternal love to man. The heavenly life with its transcendent destiny of glory and bliss is already begun upon earth.

"If your missionaries were to preach in this loving and sympathetic strain to the proud Brahmans, jealous of the honour of their ancestors, they would be more willing to respond to the appeal of Jesus, inasmuch as it restores to them that belief in the Fatherhood of God in which their ancestors trusted; and this conception would once more find its proper place in modern, or rather Transformed, Hinduism. In this way the mission of Jesus would bear abundant fruit. The first successful blow would have been struck for the overthrow of Polytheism with its attendant evils; and that blow would have come from reformed Hinduism itself. In this way also the two faiths, Christianity and Hinduism, would be harmonised and reconciled in a joint belief in the transcendency and personality of God, i.e. in the worship of one God, our Father in heaven. As God's Ambassador and as man's leader and teacher, the last Avatar upon earth, Jesus, would in that day be honoured and beloved by the Hindus, as a great moral force and spiritual dynamic to lead them to God.

"Let us now consider the wide prevalence of Polytheism in India. Polytheism has been in existence ever since India was inhabited, and has continued through all her chequered history until our own time. The Upanishad gives the philosophical explanation. Seeing that Brahm is One and the All, it follows that the All is Brahm, or that Brahm is everything. The whole difference between Polytheism and Monotheism hinges upon one word, namely, 'creation.' The former merges Brahm and Nature into one; the latter looks upon Nature not as Brahm, but as His workmanship, and hence He becomes the Creator. In like manner, God's Immanence in the world we may define as the all-enfolding, all-pervading. all-sustaining, and all-inspiring life, but this conception should not lead us to Polytheism. The physical plane of Nature, although it

owes its existence and preservation to God, can never be the object of worship; even the spiritual plane with the soul of man as its apex cannot be an object of worship. God is above Nature, above man, and therefore the sole object of worship. Both have been created by Him, and it is because God is the 'Creator' that Monotheism is the true religion. On this conception Monotheists confine their worship to one God, for it would be folly to worship created things, whether angels or men or the lower creation. And experience has shown that by Polytheism people have sunk deeper and deeper into gross superstition.

"Now there are different ways of leading our countrymen from Polytheism to Monotheism. There is first the appeal to the Rig Veda, our most sacred scripture. For instance, in the Rig Veda, No. 121, we read:—

'Who is earth's begetter?

He whose laws are sure,

The Heaven's *Creator*,

He who brought the great and lucid water.

What God shall we adore with our oblation? Prajapati (Lord of Creation,) thou only Comprehendest all these created things, And none beside Thee.'

There is also Hymn 129, called the 'Creation,' said to have been inspired by Prajapati the Supreme, also the Isas in the Brahmana, &c. These sacred hymns, therefore, of themselves, show the Hindus the defect of their philosophical argument. They can appeal to their holiest and most ancient scripture in favour of the view that the world is Brahm's creation, and not Brahm itself. If one considers other ancient nations which took the same view, such as the Jews when they became strict Monotheists, one will find that their reformers expressed themselves strongly against idolatry and image-worship. It would therefore be in conformity with their ancient scriptural conceptions if enlightened Hindus now began the overthrow of Polytheism. To all orthodox Hindus the infallibility of the Rig Veda on this point would be a strong argument for the reformers. Besides this argument, however,

Monotheists may trust to other agencies in order to further their mission; and the chief of these would be the education of their countrymen in Western ideas and in science, which would bring them out of darkness into light. Therefore, let the motto of all true lovers of the Hindus be, 'Educate elevate,' and it must follow, as day follows night, that their divinities and idols will gradually disappear. Furthermore, with the spread of the truth-seeking spirit of Jesus throughout Hindu society, this great reformation will make progress all the more rapidly. I may add that I have just read our friend's book called 'Transformed Hinduism,' where our Scottish author treats this question and others bearing upon the reformation of the Hindu faiths in, to me at least, a convincing manner; so I need not enlarge. It is sad to think that most Europeans come out here with the sole object of making money, and such as these take not the slightest trouble to study thoughts and aspirations of the Hindus, as expressed in their literature ancient and modern.

It is no wonder then that the two races keep apart, without understanding each other.

"The sum of our investigations may now be shortly stated. We have found that the three aspects of God-His Transcendency, His Personality, and His Immanence-aresummed up in Monotheism, and are to be found in the sacred writings of the Hindus, and that Monotheism is the only true doctrine for Hindus to embrace. There should be no spirit of antagonism, however, in trying to convert these heirs of an ancient and wonderful civilisation. There should rather be the spirit of conciliation and of admiration for what is true and beautiful in their faith—a faith, moreover, which is capable of enlargement and fulfilment through the faith of Jesus, who is their own spiritual child and the world's saviour, and whom therefore, as said, they may well accept as their tenth Avatar, the last and the highest, promised by their ancient Rishis for the world's salvation.

"Let us now secondly consider Christianity as a system of beauty. I need not say much,

for our friend has treated this fully in another of his books, 'God the Beautiful,' to which I refer you. The harmony and perfection of created Being in its physical, moral, and spiritual aspects we sum up as 'Beauty.' Since Christianity is founded on the highest principles of attractive beauty, both passive and active, one would expect Christians to be the most beautiful in character and conduct of all the inhabitants of the earth. It is not the fault of the principles if Christians do not all shine like stars, nor is it the fault of the glorious example which has given life and inspiration to the Christian faith. The proper cause must be looked for elsewhere. It is because there is so little of what Jesus called in symbolic language, 'hunger and thirst after righteousness,' and because there is so great a hunger and thirst for material 'wealth' wherewith to gratify the cravings of our lower nature for pleasure, honour, and power. Here, in India, this is all too patent. Nor can it be questioned that the lives of Christians here, and their distorted image of

Jesus, have been all along one of the hindrances to the spread of his religion among us. And yet in no other place in the world, nor in any other nation, would Jesus find in so large a measure the negative virtues which he prized so highly, and why? Because Buddha's mild doctrines had been permeating the whole of India long before and ever since Jesus was born, and Jesus, it seems, himself imbibed Buddha's beautiful faith, and upon the 'negative' virtues also placed the chief foundation of his religious system. To India, then, belongs the credit, if only indirectly, of having made Jesus what he was, and of having enabled him to do what he did for the good of humanity. It is, therefore, not so much as a Palestine Jew as in the spirit of a true Hindu, that Jesus comes back to India and offers us his noble worship, which has been among the Western nations for so long but which actually had an Indian origin.

"The Christian missionaries ought to come with this gratifying information to the Hindus,

who would look with much more favour upon it and all the more readily accept it. Upon this foundation they would remodel their antiquated systems, which, having seen their day, must now give way to the higher and nobler faith of Jesus. As already suggested, this faith would conquer by the convincing truth and simplicity of its creed, viz.:—

- "Belief in the fatherhood of God.
- "Belief in the brotherhood of man.
- "Belief in living the life of love as Jesus himself lived it towards God and man, even unto death, leaving us an example that we should follow in his footsteps.

In one sense, that of an example, Jesus is not the only one for humanity to follow. There have been many consecrated souls in the world who have lived like Jesus in the love of God and man, and who have suffered and made life-long sacrifices for the sake of others, but around none of them has clustered such a constellation of glorious services for the soul life of humanity as Jesus performed in his

short pilgrimage on earth. Let me summarise:—

- "Jesus proclaimed the unity of God and the fatherhood of God.
- "Jesus proclaimed forgiveness of sins solely by restitution, repentance, and reformation.
- "Jesus proclaimed the uselessness of Jewish sacrifices of blood and ceremonial observances for the forgiveness of sins. By rejecting the sacrifice of animals and the dictates of an infallible priesthood, Jesus overthrew the entire sacrificial worship of the temple at Jerusalem. This protest was the chief cause of his violent death.
- "Jesus proclaimed our divinity and sonship of God with him.
- "Jesus proclaimed the brotherhood of man and the service of man.
- "Jesus taught us to live the life of love for God and man.
- "Jesus taught us to cultivate truth at all costs.

- "Jesus taught us benevolence, fortitude, patience, purity, and all passive and active graces.
- "Jesus taught us the value of vicariousness as the law of life.
- "Jesus taught that sin's antidote is love, and that only by love can we reach a higher life.
- "Jesus taught us the certainty of the immortality of the soul and its high destiny, for the God he worshipped was not the God of the dead but of the living. Our life on earth is, therefore, only the first stage of our conscious existence and personal communion with God. It needs Eternity to develop these to their full fruition, hence our immortality in the life of love is secured. With this assurance, from the Pisgah of an earthly existence, we look with joy towards the promised life of immortality and of glory. This inspires the soul with an unquenchable hope and courage, which enables it to

bear life's burdens and trials with patience, and makes even death a welcome guest.

For these and other noble services Jesus stands unique amongst the martyrs, reformers, and benefactors of mankind.

"We find, however, that both Buddha and Jesus extolled the passive virtues above the active; and here, in India, the doctrines of Buddha have taken such a hold for more than two thousand years that, go where you choose, you will find no nation with so many admirable traits of the passive virtues, such as patience, gentleness, and horror at shedding blood or at violence of any kind. But what has been the consequence to India? Has it not been the conquest of our country by one nation of robber-bands after another, culminating in your own nation conquering it, chiefly by fraud and treachery, but also, it must be confessed, by conspicuous bravery and talent. Excuse me for speaking to you so plainly, but the truth must be told. Now one of the chief reasons of the success of all these

invaders arises from this national characteristic of ours—the possession, in excess, of the passive virtues, and the absence of those active virtues which should accompany noble manhood. Both Buddha and Jesus, apparently, did not give due heed to this aspect of the question, for judging others by themselves they miscalculated the strong power of the animal nature in man, which seeks first its own gratification, let those suffer or die who may. Do you think that if the warlike instincts of India, which distinguished it before the teaching of Buddha, had been well developed, any of the invaders from the North or from the sea would have been able to crush the Hindus, who were then more than 200 million souls? It would have been impossible. Now the question arises, how can our countrymen recover their ancient martial spirit and gain strength by-and-by to exclude all foreigners, and once more rule India, free from outside influence? In short, how can India become master in its own house? To my mind this can only be done by going back

to the spirit of the Rig Veda's age, and by learning of our venerable ancestors how they combined both the passive and the active virtues in one harmonious whole and fought their enemies and prospered.

"I take it that it is chiefly through the invasions of our own kinsmen, the Aryans of the North, that you have got infused into your blood that strength of body and mind, that bravery and noble spirit which knows how to protect its own, and has made you men, not slaves, as you have almost brought us to be. We have ourselves to blame, I confess, and, to do you justice, you have ruled with impartiality and uprightness, although with a strong and despotic hand, and in many ways your rule has been a blessing to India. It is well for Christianity that the mild teaching of Jesus has not overmastered the active graces, which are required in every country and by every individual. You have realised the fact, and you have acted upon it, that existence is founded upon 'struggle.' The fighting propensities must hence have their due place if

the world is to throw off what is old and effete, and bring in what is better and more adapted for an advancing civilisation. A purer and happier life will be ours if we are prepared for war. Self-interest must not be overborne by altruism. Both should have their due place.

"I shall now hasten to a close with a few remarks suggested by the title 'Transformed Hinduism,' which our friend here has given to one of his books. From what I have said, you will see what has to be done. India, in its religious aspect, has to be transformed from Polytheism to Monotheism, from belief in an absent Brahm to the conception of a Supra-Personality—a Personality such as our early ancestors and Jesus realised, viz. that of our Father in heaven. India must be transformed from its narrow caste system to a loving brotherhood of man, from a compact collectivism, under the despotic sway of customs, to the freedom of individualism, acting upon its own initiative and becoming the dynamic force in society, always searching for new truths and marching in the van of progress for the amelioration of the world. India must be transformed through the sterling virtues of manhood, through activity, enterprise, robustness of mind, and persevering ability to grapple with its own affairs India must be transformed from being entirely dependent upon a benevolent despotism and a foreign power. It must learn to rule with wisdom and uprightness all its states, as a colonial federation, in home affairs, under the protection and oversight of British power, without which it could not stand alone, owing to its numerous races with their conflicting interests.

"India does not want to be separated from Great Britain. The latter has all along been a friend to India, and, according to her own light, has tried to rule with justice and impartiality. She has also introduced the wisdom of Western civilisation. She has failed to introduce her own religious faith, owing to causes which I have already explained. She has transformed India in the various departments of

State. Her missionaries will only be able to transform Hinduism by adopting the methods which I have roughly sketched.

"The moral and spiritual darkness of India can only be dispelled—

"1st. By the light of a higher knowledge,

"2nd. By the acceptance of a higher faith.

"This can only be done by educating the natives, from the highest to the lowest, whether within the castes or outside of them. Let truth shine into their minds and hearts—the truth which science and the faith of Jesus bring—and the truth shall make them free from all the gross errors and superstitions which have enchained them. As regards their Polytheism, this must be transformed into the Monotheistic faith of Jesus, as already explained.

"One more agency is needed for the consolidation of reason and faith in India. This is the converting power, which every true Christian should bring with him who visits or comes to live here, whether soldier, civilian, merchant, teacher, or missionary. The missionaries, of course, are always expected to be examples to their flocks and the community where they live, reflecting the beautiful character and blissful spirit of Jesus, and no doubt they all do this more or less successfully, but it is chiefly the other classes of British society who come here to whom this warning is most needed. The Hindus naturally judge of Christianity, not only from the lives and conversation of missionaries, but even more perhaps from the character and conduct of the other classes. Yet few think of this, or make it a consideration in regulating their actions. If the military, the civil, the trading, or the travelling public, which have visited India during the last 150 years, had attempted to convert the Hindu simply by the devoted lives they led, the work of converting the country would have been much farther forward to-day. Anyhow, it is not yet too late; and this is one more advice I wish to leave with you as necessary for the transformation of Hinduism to reformed Christianity. As an encouragement and an inspiration, let Europeans remember how Buddha and his disciples attacked the problem, namely, by living the faith which they professed. They became a blessing and a help to all wherever they went, and succeeded in winning a great part of India to their simple faith and life, which has left its mark in the gentle and peaceful virtues of high and low."

Our host here interrupted the Hindu friend, and said: "It is all very well to hold up the ancient Buddhists as examples to Europeans living in India, but a comparison is hardly possible. My experience, during a prolonged stay in India, is that Europeans of the better classes show upon the whole a good example to the natives. I would also point to a few of the blessings which have come to India through the presence of Europeans. British Government has always endeavoured to govern for the good of the people, and dealt impartially with all classes, religions, and castes, and in this way it has uplifted humanity in India. Is this not a great boon to a country, which at one time was sunk in constant warfare

and gross misgovernment? The rule of Great Britain has brought progress, freedom, the equality of all men before God, the sacredness of women, the passion for helping all in distress. This is the watchword of Britain at home, and this she has introduced into India, as the people are fit for it. She is willing to introduce progress and freedom in all directions, whether educational, industrial, social, political, moral, or religious. What more can India want? Mediævalism and all its attendant restrictions are doomed before the movements of the modern spirit. Caution and wisdom, however, are needed not to go too much ahead of the people we rule. Look also at the scope and influence of Christian philanthropy. It has built hospitals, orphanages, and leper asylums; it has engaged in zenana work; it has systematic famine-relief funds, and it has introduced vernacular and female education. As regards other schemes supported by the Government, let me state that it is developing the cultivation of the soil, forestry, mining and other industries, drainage and sanitation in cities, and I do not know what more. Let me put it to you, has there ever been any Government in India from the earliest times which has been such a blessing to India as our own little country has been? For my part, I do not believe it.

"As for the missionary problem, I think that the men and women sent from Europe and America are doing noble work for India, so far as they see the problem they have set themselves to solve, and considering the difficult position in which they are often placed. And looking away from India, to what our missionaries have been able to do in savage Africa and among the cannibals of the Pacific islands, I confess that I do not know any other agency deserving of more credit or honour. As some one has well said: 'A true missionary is a sterling character and a splendid fellow. He is much more than a preacher among these savage races. He is a teacher, an administrator, a linguist, a cultivator, a builder, a doctor, a pioneer, a man of a thousand emergencies, the father of his people, improving social conditions and morals, teaching the people the value of work, thrift, hospitality, and a charitable spirit. He is one of the great redeeming forces of the world." Our host added: "With this opinion I entirely agree. All honour to the missionaries. They are the salt of the earth."

Our Hindu friend applauded these remarks, and said: "You see everything through rosecoloured spectacles, and yet what you have said contains much truth. I believe myself that India will not continue to prosper unless the bond between her and Great Britain remains. Only, despotic rule must gradually give way, as the Hindus are prepared for it, to a system resembling colonial self-government or to home rule for each separate State, as we see it in the United States of America. I see, however, the force of your remark, that this extension of freedom is not possible unless the natives show themselves fit for it by being first properly educated and having their moral and patriotic nature quickened and elevated. India is passing

through a period of transition, which is always an anxious time for the rulers as well as for the ruled, but the practical sense and calm wisdom of Great Britain will no doubt know how to guide the ship of State from troublous waters into the harbour of peace and safety."

Our host quite agreed with these remarks, and closed the discussion by saying:—

"After all is said, it is not only in India that much still requires to be done to raise the toiling and sunken masses to a higher civilisation with its manifold blessed influences. One result at least should be, thereby to enable all to live their lives under better and happier conditions than exist at present. This, as you know, is not a new battle-cry. History shows us the weary struggle of centuries, yea of millenniums, for religious, intellectual, and political freedom all over the world; hence democracy in our days may be called the revolt of the people against the domination of class privilege and the attempt by the Socialists upon the basis of brotherhood and brotherliness to solve the great social problems

arising from the unequal distribution of wealth. In our days are added more especially the struggles of industrial emancipation and the amelioration of social wrongs. It cannot be denied that the modern world is everywhere in the midst of economic injustice, industrial conflicts, and social sorrows-having, for instance, permitted slums to exist in their great cities in Europe, worse than in India, which breed ignorance, vice, and crime; where drunkenness, gambling, prostitution, poverty, sweating, and other evils are rampant, and therefore rapidly deteriorating, physically, mentally, and morally, those unfortunate ones who are forced to live there with their children, who naturally are contaminated from early childhood, in such debasing environments.

"Yet, to my mind, these struggles for betterment may be looked upon as the very birthpangs of the coming of the Divine Spirit in human society.

"Social Evolution is advancing from conditions which hinder, mar, and blight human lives, to conditions which shall free, glorify,

and beautify them; hence our highest perception of moral and social relations must be based upon freedom, justice, and brotherhood, which will remove the existing social and economic conditions which hitherto have baffled and bruised the bodies, minds, and souls of men. The creation being founded upon love, as revealed by Jesus, the true service of God is the service which seeks the welfare and happiness of others. This will gradually lift humanity out of its sorrows and sins, and unite it closer to the great heart of God.

"To my mind, the true panacea of most of the world's ills, is to regulate the lives of individuals, of communities, and of nations by the simple and yet sublime maxims by which Jesus regulated his own life when upon earth, namely, by 'Love and Service.' Some one has said in this connection, that we can give nothing so precious, so full of blessing, as our love; hence, if all loved one another, no wrong would willingly be done, all our duties would be joyfully fulfilled, we should all trust one another and be trustworthy. This would

bring peace, contentment, and happiness into our own lives and into the lives of others so far as this life with its vicissitudes could do.

"These remarks are to my mind to the point, hence I will only say in closing that the world's salvation in its moral, social, and spiritual aspect will only make progress in proportion as the maxim of 'Love and Service' by which Jesus lived, practised, and died, becomes the daily dominant factor in the world's life, work, and aspirations.

"By living, therefore, more and more in the loving and self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus, Christianity as a system will conquer the world, and establish its claim as being truly the world's universal and most satisfying creed, suitable for all people and for all ages."

CHAPTER VI

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIANITY

THE cool of the evening having now set in, our host proposed an hour's drive, which we enjoyed. After supper our Hindu friend rose to take leave, but our host in his warmhearted Scottish fashion pressed him to stay. We had still a couple of hours before midnight, and as we three "searchers after truth" might never again meet together in this world we ought to take full advantage of the opportunity. This was agreed to. Turning to the Hindu, our host said:—

"There is one subject upon which you have casually touched, and I should like to hear you further upon it. What is your own view of the life of Jesus? We have it, of course, portrayed in the four Gospels, but everything

nowadays is tested and has to justify itself. I should like, therefore, to have the presentation of Jesus examined and looked at through Hindu spectacles, and all the more as you think the miraculous elements found therein ought to be brushed aside as contrary to truth."

Our friend smiled, and with his usual amiability assented to the proposal, only asking for a time to collect his thoughts.

"With lives of Jesus Christ," he began, "the world is nearly surfeited, chiefly, I surmise, because they have all treated the subject solely from a Christian standpoint. To find the truth, however, it would be necessary to take a new line and to look upon the life and death of Jesus from an Oriental point of view, and in the light of Oriental studies. You will remember that I referred to this yesterday. Allow me, however, to tell you at once what I would aim at, and what I would have demonstrated to you if time had permitted.

"1st. I would have claimed that the

teaching attributed to Jesus had been influenced by Oriental wisdom, to which Buddhism, Hinduism, and even more so Zoroastrianism, had been large contributors.

"2nd. I would have tried to prove that part of the miraculous drapery in which Jesus has been presented by his biographers is also essentially Oriental, having been drawn more or less from Mithraism, Buddhism, and kindred beliefs.

"3rd. After having swept away the miraculous element which has disfigured Jesus in his noble simplicity and beauty (just as if the immortal statue of Jupiter by Phidias had been draped in a tawdry royal dress, in order to improve upon the sculptor's perfect creation), you will only then truly realise what Jesus was, in his actuality, in his divinity, in his moral beauty, and in his exceeding loveliness. We shall only then be justified in looking upon him as the world's true ideal and spiritual Saviour, worthy of our reverence, love, and devotion. I need say no more, and as we are late, I shall also be short in

what I have to say about India's glory and pre-eminence in the world as a religious, philosophical, and spiritual force.

"As a Hindu, proud of his country, I would first point out that the whole world through ages past has been a debtor to India. I have heard British people singing with great enthusiasm that 'Britain rules the waves.' I can claim with much more truth that India rules a higher realm, 'the mind and soul of humanity,' and has done so for more than three thousand years.

"From the early dawn of history, India, rich in its own abundance, with a well-favoured climate and soil, became the hunting-ground of starving, rapacious powers. Yet it survived them all, and increased in population and in wealth. Rich in treasures and valuable productions, it exported its surplus to the rest of the world, and lo, large trading cities rose and fell as the trade with India increased or was transferred to other emporiums. But it was not till the invasion of Alexander the Great (326 B.C.) that its mental and spiritual

wealth became known to the world. Alexander had brought with him a number of learned men to study the literature of India. Returning to Europe, after sitting at the feet of its wise men, they gave to Greece that intellectual and spiritual vision with which she afterwards enriched the world. Indeed, competent scholars in Europe to-day admit that the principles of philosophy and science were first got from India. Our country was the fountain-head from which nearly all these mental streams have taken their rise and blessed the world. But why enlarge? I repeat that India for more than three thousand years has ruled the thoughts of men, even in the foremost races of the twentieth century.

"Let me turn now to the subject of religion. Here again I affirm that India has ruled and is still ruling the greater part of humanity.

"Consider Hinduism with its ca. 220 million souls.

"Consider Buddhism with its ca. 480 million souls.

"Consider Christianity with its ca. 445 million souls.

"In numbers alone, what other religious system can compare with the religious systems which have emanated directly or indirectly from India? Not only so, but the flower of the human race is still ruled by the religious conceptions of India. This assertion I might have proved to you if time had permitted, but may do so at another opportunity. I will merely repeat my assertion, that the leading principles of the reported discussions of Jesus, and the miraculous elements by which his life is introduced to us, are drawn more or less from Persian, Oriental, and other sources, including Buddhism."

"Well," our host said, "if you are right, I would be constrained to admit that your arguments would be convincing, however unpleasant it might be for a simple-minded Christian to find that the building which he thought was founded upon a Divine rock is after all built upon shifting sand; nevertheless, great is truth, and let it prevail. But tell me,

please, why do you think that the miraculous stories of the Bible can still be of use to the Church?"

Our friend said: "I repeat that if all these miracles about the early life of Jesus have no actual basis, they still contain a fount of spiritual beauty for which the world will ever be grateful."

To this our host replied: "I cannot follow you in regard to the poetry connected with these events. I wish to know the *facts*. If I have these, I seek for nothing further. But perhaps you will make your thoughts more luminous to our dull minds, and enable us to grasp the poetry: understanding by this, that where there is no message to the intellect, there will at least be one to the heart."

Our friend said: "I shall have to speak of a 'mother's love.' It touches a tender chord in my heart, for it brings before me the love of my mother, who has been my guardian angel all my days. No outsider can ever know what love, what sacrifices, what patience, my mother exemplified when left a widow with a large and young family. Early and late she toiled for many years, denying herself on every hand to bring us up in God's fear and to become useful members of society. And, God bless her! she has had her reward. Life to her has been a hard reality, but it was her ideality, the poetry of her nature, her love to God and her children, which gave her the victory over every obstacle. Yes, I believe in God, because I believe in my mother. The angels of heaven may be beautiful, but all of them together cannot compare with the sweet voice and smile of my old mother at home, nor will heaven be heaven to me without my mother. But these are private matters. You wish to know the poetry, the Divine beauty, hid in the birth stories of Jesus. Let me explain in a few words.

"There is poetry in a young life from its first entrance into the world. Ah, who can tell the wellspring of passionate and undying love which starts up in the heart of the young mother, when she clasps her helpless firstborn in her arms, so precious and beautiful to her? Do you think that the angels' song of praise at the advent of a child, which the legends tell us surrounded the Divine infant, would be half so fervent, half so spontaneous, as that which rises from a mother's heart at the priceless gift sent to her care from heaven above? Little does this infant conceive, as the mother bends over her treasure, that she would willingly, and without a moment's hesitation, give her life to protect her child from harm.

"And as time passes, and the mother sees with delight her firstborn grow up to boyhood, how many waking dreams has she as to his future! With that quick, alert mind, which learns everything so easily; that eager spirit for knowledge, which ever puts questions and yet somehow without her help always finds a ready answer: she sees him in her day-dreams going up to the temple of Jerusalem with her, his curiosity raised to the highest point by all that he sees around him. There in the lofty marble halls of the learned, where the scribes and wise men congregate to receive pilgrims, old and young, and to solve difficult problems

of the laws of Israel, she believes in her own fond fancies that her gifted boy, gifted beyond any she knows, will be a match for them all—if not at once, yet as he grows up, possibly to fill one of the seats of the learned or to enter the Sanhedrim Court, a blessing and honour to Israel and the little highland town where she dwells. Ah, what ambitious schemes often fill a mother's heart for the one in whom her soul delights. Learning, riches, honour—there is nothing high or noble which she would not desire to be his as a reward for honourable and strenuous toil.

"Above all, there is the soul-life of her darling, the immortal portion upon which everything depends. The time will come—she hardly trusts herself to think of it—when the son will leave her protecting care and alone face life's trials in his own strength. How can she provide against these unknown dangers which may destroy his soul? Will her prayers be sufficient? Yes, thanks to Jehovah these have their efficacy, for communion with the Highest is ever open, and who can guide,

strengthen, and protect her boy better than the Almighty Himself? Yet she feels instinctively, and her common sense confirms it, that there is a sacred duty given to her by God, a duty which no one can perform so well as herself. She is the living medium for God, and can impress upon the young heart heaven's laws to lead him in the right path; and more than this, implant love and devotion to God which will form a panoply against the fiercest assaults of Evil. From the boy's early childhood the mother sows the seed of heavenly graces, which, when the tempter comes with flattering words, give the young soul the strength of character, the spiritual vision, the loyalty to truth and duty, the childlike devotion to a Heavenly Father's will, which overcome the crafty solicitations of the tempter, whether man or woman. With the words of the Divine Jesus in his temptation: 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' the victory is won amidst the conscious joy of the soul and high heaven's acclaims of praise: 'And angels came to minister unto him.'

"But why pursue these trains of thought? Enough has been said to show that behind the beautiful legends of the birth and early life of Jesus there is a wealth of poetic truth which every mother can realise and sympathise with. Therefore, the Gospel miracles, even if the prosaic mind cannot admit them as actual occurrences, will ever touch the poetic nature of humanity. They are worth preserving for their spiritual lessons, which appeal to what is holiest and truest in every heart.

"Speaking as a practical man of the world, however, and still more as a seeker after truth, do you really think the world will suffer any harm if it disbelieves all miracles and supernatural events recorded in religions? I myself think that the world would be all the better to be rid of these. Take the Hindu and Buddhist writings alone, the amount of ignorance and superstition bound up in these tomes is appalling, and the same statement may be applied to the Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan faiths, &c. As humanity follows Jesus in searching for truth, the accumulation of

errors and misconceptions gathered through centuries will disappear and man will be freer and happier. This applies also to the speculative element in many of these systems, especially in Hinduism, which tries to solve the unsolvable. Even in Christianity dogmatic theology has piled up heaps of rubbish concerning metaphysical ability, moral inability, effectual calling, irresistible grace, foreknowledge of free action, fore-ordination of Divine action, total depravity, human helplessness, and what not. Indeed, time would fail to tell of the clash of polemics and the harsh sounds of wrangling which characterised the early Church councils. What good has ever come out of them? The good is a vanishing point, the evil has been enormous. History shows that where sacerdotalism, formalism, literalism, infallibility, and intolerance flourish, the results are generally uncharitableness, spiritual pride, cant, and hypocrisy. Legal obligations are substituted for love, bondage to the letter for freedom in the spirit, automatism for aspiration and progress."

Turning to me the host said: "You desire to introduce a 'Transformed Hinduism' into India, but our friend by his criticism is doing the same with our own religion, which he may as well call 'Reformed Christianity,' and as such it may better be called 'Victorious Christianity.' Indeed, very little remains except Jesus himself and the principles for which he lived and died. Perhaps these are enough, however, for the reconstruction of Christianity as a transformed system of truth. The question now arises, How in these altered circumstances are we to regard Jesus in the future?"

Our Hindu friend replied: "Let us frankly face the truth. Even then what remains for humanity is a priceless possession, an everliving, ever-inspiring fountain of truth. We shall become more Christian as we become more like Jesus in his character and in the principles for which he lived and died. The religion of Jesus will not lose in beauty, grandeur, or truth, if all the mythologies or legends are discredited and forgotten. Even

if the parables and maxims were drawn by Jesus from Buddha's scriptures or other sources such as I may show another time, and adapted by him and others, they are beautiful in themselves and serve their purpose.

"I affirmed that the records of the supernatural life and teaching of Jesus are in many cases a recast of the accounts of Buddha's and other Pagan so-called Divine Redeemers' lives and teachings long before the Christian era. No doubt, as more light is thrown on this subject, the times of the first century will be better understood, and my contention will be found to be right, that Christianity has to a considerable extent its root in Mazdeism, Greek and Roman Paganism, and in Buddhism. Already the pathway which the Buddha missionaries took in order to promulgate their faith has been traced step by step from India to Judea."

After a pause our host resumed the conversation, by saying: "It seems to me we may as well become Buddhists at once if, according to your explanation, Christianity is

to a considerable extent an offshoot of Buddhism."

"Nay, verily," said our Hindu friend, "quite the contrary. It is just because Christianity has one root in Judaism and the other in Buddhism, Mithraism, and other Oriental faiths, that it is destined to become the world's universal creed, its highest expression of religious worship. Do you not see its high calling? In Christianity we have the Monotheistic faith of the Jews, evolved by Jesus to its truest expression as based upon love.

"In Christianity we also find the social gospel of Buddha, on which are engrafted all the beautiful virtues that form society into a compact body of help and a brotherhood, but Jesus has saved society from the enervating influence of the Buddhist faith when it sinks at last into a monkish religion of self-isolation as the highest aim of life. In the religion of Jesus we find the harmony of the active and the passive virtues, which alone can make a perfect man and a perfect society.

"Perfection is the standard Jesus set up for

us to aim at, and this can only be reached through truth. Both can only be gained by striving, i.e. by a constant struggle against our corrupt or rather undeveloped nature, and against the forces of environment, which drag us down to lower levels. The fact that the religion of Jesus is based upon aspiration and 'striving' just as in the whole Cosmos around us, gives his religion a superiority over all others, which clearly proves that in the world's competitive systems 'Reformed Christianity' based solely upon 'the Divine principles of Jesus' will become humanity's glorious possession as its highest faith. The Reformed Christianity will in the end be victorious over all other creeds, because it will be built upon 'truth,' and the factors necessary for successful evangelisation will be found in the following simple creed:-

> 'Love in action towards man, Love in worship towards God.'

This simple creed will give unity of action. It will form one great brotherhood, it will be the gospel of humanity based upon reason and love, working together towards a balanced and harmonious whole:—

'All things with each other blending, Each to all its being lending, All on each in turn depending.'

"'Reformed Christianity' will not lend the sanction of its great name to violence and aggression. Arbitration will be substituted for brute force. An exalted enthusiasm for humanity will by God's strength, and by following in the steps of Jesus, abolish one social evil after another. Universal benevolence, to be in the highest and grandest sense successful, must seek its sanction for action in the spirit of love, in the methods which Jesus adopted. All men love their friends, Jesus alone loved his enemies.

"The true religion of Jesus advances ever onwards and upwards. Truth, progress, and freedom are the laws of our being, and in them we see the divinity of the principles upon which his Church must be built. It will therefore ever stand, and gradually assimilate the other systems in the world and draw them into its ample fold. The various faiths are all more or less related, but in 'Transformed Christianity' they will find their true centre and inspiration. Every advance in civilisation and truth works in favour of true Christianity.

"Therefore by the inherent and indestructible principles of truth, love and beauty, which together reveal Divine perfection, and upon which the religion of Jesus is built, true Christianity will in ages to come evolve its inexhaustible potentialities and enlarge the sphere of its influence. Its advance can be as little stayed as the mighty sweep of the solar systems revolving through infinite space, because God, whose whole being radiates love, will draw all souls into the current of His own Divine life, and advance them, as they become more like Jesus, from one degree of glory and splendour to another—time without end.

"If you wish a name for this faith that is

to conquer the spiritual Empire of India, this coming triumphal progress among the rest of the sons of men, call it the Christian 'Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty,' for it means:—

"1st. The worship of one God, our Heavenly Father, as revealed by Jesus.

"2nd. The worship of one God in the beauty of holiness, love, and truth, as seen in the life of Jesus.

"In other words, it means that in worshipping God we do so not only by sentiments and words, but also by deeds, after the example of Jesus in his Divine life upon earth, who not only professed to love God and to live for God, but proved his love by also loving men and making sacrifices for them, even unto death, thus teaching us that we cannot live life in higher terms than in terms of love.

"Let humanity therefore follow in the footsteps of Jesus and society will be regenerated, heaven will come down to earth. Yes, behold the kingdom of love upon earth is at hand, because Jesus is now being understood in his life, his mission, and his death for the regeneration and salvation of the world. His holy cause needs no adventitious aid from miracles or prophecies or legends, or from belief in a Trinity and other metaphysical subtleties and assumptions. Great is truth. Truth will prevail and the truth will make us free."

It was now near midnight, and our Hindu friend rose to go. We pledged each other's health and parted with mutual regret. Early next morning I left Bombay for home, having promised my dear Scotch friend on leaving that I would send him from home my replies to sundry queries bearing upon philosophical thoughts current among the Hindus, regarding which he desired enlightenment.

These explanations are appended in the remaining chapters, and have all some connection with the subjects of our previous conversations.

CHAPTER VII

INDIA'S INTELLECTUAL GREATNESS

I SEE from your letter that several of your learned Brahman friends complain that Western teaching of science has a demoralising effect upon the rising generation of Hindus. This may partly be, because science treats solely of physical laws, and because doctrines relating to God, or religious truths drawn therefrom, are rigidly excluded; and this may seem to savour of Atheism. But along with this, there is a never-ceasing flood of sceptical and Agnostic writing pouring into the country. A great number of young native students, who come under these influences, may be tempted to throw overboard the religious faith of their fathers with its strict and minute caste rules, designed to keep them in the

narrow path of a holy life. Unfortunately, by imbibing these sceptical views many young Hindus lose belief in religion altogether, give the reins to their lower nature, and despise their ancient religious system.

I confess there is a great deal of truth in these complaints, the ground of which can only be removed if the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty could obtain an entrance into their hearts, along with the science of to-day, for religion and science should work hand in hand. This belief would call forth supreme love to God, the Beautiful and lovable One, and thus keep them secure from moral and spiritual contamination. Still, I think the young Hindus have no valid reason for looking contemptuously upon their ancient Aryan teachers, as many of them are inclined to do. After all, the Western nations are in a sense beginners in these sciences, many of which flourished in India more than three thousand years ago, when the greater part of Europe was sunk in barbarism. Indeed, it may be said that the foundation of human knowledge was laid by the gifted Aryan thinkers of those ages; and the advances which they made in astronomy, in mathematics, and in abstract thinking, embracing the most abstruse subjects which could occupy the human mind, still claim the world's admiration.

Take, for instance, the science of astronomy, which reaches back among the Aryans to a very remote period. Let me rapidly point out some of the remarkable discoveries of these profound thinkers. In India there are tables still extant called Surva Siddhanta, where geometrical principles are employed for deducing rules in regard to the phenomena of eclipses. The four systems of astronomical tables were all adapted to the same meridian or near it, say Benares. These tables, as you know, go far back into antiquity. Their epoch coincides with the famous era of Kali Yuga, 3102 B.c. They give, among other calculations, the precession of the equinoxes, the obliquity of the ecliptic, the length of the solar year, the aphelion of Jupiter, and the equation of Saturn's centre. The construction of these tables, which are remarkable

for their accuracy, ingenuity, and close observation, implies a considerable knowledge—not only of the practical, but of the theoretical, part of astronomy.

It is also interesting to study for a little their knowledge of the Zodiac. The Brahmans distinguished from the rest of the heavens that portion through which the sun, moon, and planets circulate. They divided this space, which we call the Zodiac, into twenty-seven equal parts, each marked by a group of stars or constellations. They made this division because the moon completes her circle among the fixed stars in about twenty-seven days. The ecliptic they divided, as with us, into twelve signs of thirty degrees each. They also determined the time in which the fixed stars complete an entire revolution, and they stated it to be 24,000 years. This motion has in our days been found to be slightly too quick, but it is wonderful how near the Brahmans, thousands of years ago, had come to the same results as modern astronomers. The ancient Brahmans recorded

the summer solstice as falling in Leo, which by modern calculations is found to have taken place 4320 years ago: since the solstice is now in Gemini, and the time required for the passage through each side is 2160 years. This latter period was also the time allowed for their Great Year, consisting of 25,920 years formed by the precession of the equinox, i.e. twelve times 2160. Modern astronomy agrees with these figures. The radius vector of the earth, according to the Brahmans, was 800 million stadia, or about 92 million English miles. The surprising thing is that observations at the transit of Venus confirm this estimate, the exact figures being 91,931,818 English miles.

Modern researches regarding the Zodiac have shown that these early astronomers lived not further south than Lat. 36° and not further north than Lat. 42°, and hence that neither Egypt nor Babylon could have been the home of those who originally named the constellations about 2800 years B.C. They lived in Asia Minor or on the high steppes

of Asia, where the early Aryans wandered for ages with their flocks before descending upon India. These gifted people therefore brought with them to their adopted country the astronomical knowledge which they had gained on the high plateau of Asia.

In after ages the scattered knowledge of Hindu astronomy was reduced to more concise and practical form, especially by the celebrated Aryabhata, born at Pataliputra about A.D. 476. This astronomer had the distinction of affirming the rotation of the earth round its axis, and of explaining more clearly the causes of eclipses of the sun and moon. Other celebrated astronomers during the early Christian era were Varaha Mihira and especially Brahmagupta, born A.D. 598. The latter's works were held in the highest esteem for many centuries. The Brahmans Rishis were so celebrated that they became the teachers of the Arabs, and also of the Khalifs of Bagdad, in astronomy, and in all the sciences then known. They had the honour also of inventing the decimal system of notation since used all over the world, likewise the still favourite game of chess. I need not, however, enlarge. The Aryans through their learned caste stood foremost in everything which could occupy the human mind, whether in religion, philosophy, literature, science, law, medicine, or in the art of war. The Hindus of our own day ought therefore to be proud of the glorious achievements of their ancestors, and instead of sitting still and living contentedly upon the past, should use these splendid conquests as stepping-stones for still further victories of the spirit over matter. They will then have the honour of advancing the progress of the human race, along with their kinsmen the British Aryans and with other nations, and of pulling down the strongholds of ignorance and superstition everywhere.

Let me repeat, educated Hindus of our days have every reason to be proud of their ancestors, who conquered India and bestowed upon it a high civilisation in so many branches of human learning. Unfortunately this eager spirit of progress, based upon observation and

experiment, upon reason and reflection, gradually died out, as the Southern Dravidian and Turanian superstitious notions based upon imagination and guesswork got the upper hand. Hence astronomy degenerated into astrology, chemistry into alchemy, botany into herbalism, and anatomy into the black art. The scientific sphere became the realm of dreamers and charlatans, the philosophical sphere the realm of mystics, the religious sphere the realm of superstition, dogmatism, and a relentless spiritual tyranny.

The modern Hindu who has an open vision has therefore every inducement to shake off the gross superstitions inherited from the past and to follow in the steps of his revered ancestors, the gifted Hindu Aryans. These are best represented in our age by the intrepid British Aryans, who have also descended from the same noble and gifted stock. In the hand of providence, their fortunes have now been linked with the Hindus under the flag of the British Empire. By this union both will surely prosper, for both have inherited

mental and spiritual gifts of the highest order; and by cultivating what is best in each, will march together in the van of the world's progress. Thus a new era will arise for India, and she will be great and glorious in the best sense of these words.

Just a reminder. The modern Hindu must look upon the human race as a whole. His creed must be that of the brotherhood of humanity, his practice Altruism, and his worship that of one God only, as set forth in the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty. He must also realise the unity of the Cosmos, the operation of the same laws and principles in the most distant regions of space, and their absolute unchangeableness.

Science finds one principle acting alike in both great and small. In the spiritual world the universal principle is love. Upon this principle true religion is founded, which, guided by reason and knowledge, leads to a grand Monotheism with the highest spiritual ideal of one God, who possesses every conceivable perfection and attraction to make us

love and serve Him. Religion and science, physics and metaphysics, each is a complement of the other, a partial phase of the one great Reality. Science endeavours to connect all the phenomena of the Cosmos into one harmonious whole and to show the inter-dependence and co-relation of every part. It is a fundamental conception of science that not one atom exists except as an integral and necessary part of the whole. This principle of unity will be extended so as to embrace the spiritual aspects of our nature and the inner consciousness of our relation to an unseen world, for man in his essence is related to the Divine by a love which is everlasting.

Our divinity will thus become the root idea of every true religion, so that in a very dear sense we may become one with God, one with the Divine in His exalted character and purpose for the blessing of the world. We must realise that which God has willed us to become and of which He is the only perfect and beautiful pattern. The possibilities which lie before us are as boundless as the universe, as

lofty as heaven itself, for the soul will advance with an ever-deepening joy into a richer and fuller life of perfection.

The Monotheistic Religion therefore lays the foundation of that glorious spiritual Empire which will never be overthrown, but which will gradually absorb all lower religious systems; the spiritual Empire, namely, of love through sacrifice, of truth through struggle, of progress through aspiration. This Divine life of perfect Beauty, Love, and Joy will draw into its willing service the songs of poets, the beauties of art, the lyre of the musician, the eloquence of orators; as well as the dignity of labour and of thought, the devotion of patriots, the enthusiasm of reformers, the brave spirit of martyrs and missionaries, the home life, the business circle, all social and national spheres of life and energy. Every department of human society will be influenced and permeated by God's loving spirit, and thus heaven will come down to earth.

In this sublime religion of ideality and reality, there is ample room for the soul's

instinct of perfection, for ever-expanding ideals of moral and spiritual beauty, for yearnings after the ineffable and divine, for the soul's affinity with God, and for the life of love which longs to give itself for others. There are the true fountains which quench the thirst for truth and progress. There flourishes the child-like loving spirit, the wide charity which has pure and unsullied joy from the diffusion of happiness to others. Lastly, there is room for the sweet spirit of contentment and trust with the love which the name of God calls forth, as this bright vision of beauty and unspeakable tenderness arises before the believers, who bring everything to Him for His dear approval; a love which in the daily walks of life shows itself by kindness, courtesy, forbearance, sympathy, and abnegation of self; a love which prizes the peace, the honour, and the happiness of the dear home of loved ones; a love which surrounds the little ones in an atmosphere of tender affection and piety, and trains them as a trust from God to a beautiful and consecrated life.

In their lives the lovers of God are faithful. truthful, temperate, conscientious, laborious, upright, prudent, and charitable. To them no sacrament is like the sacrament of a good life which lives its highest thoughts, the eloquent rhetoric of a noble, loving, devoted life. They feel how precious it is to nourish and develop the spiritual life. Yes, the corner-stone of man's welfare and happiness will always be religion, the consecration of the visible to the invisible. The religious fellowship upon earth, a larger home circle as it were, is the great instrument for promoting piety, virtue, and love, and it is injurious to the soul's development in beauty and perfection to neglect or despise it. God's children realise that the religion of love and trust, of truth and progress, is the most sublime, the most simple, and the only true one. Each of God's children becomes a priest, his heart an altar, his love and obedience the only offerings required. And each incorporates in himself the beautiful character of God, for this is the only real transubstantiation.

The true religion of all ages and races is a religion which sets one God before man as his ideal, a Divine Being of every perfection to love, to admire, and to follow, summed up in Him whose name is music to the adoring spirit and who is our supreme Love, now and for evermore.

CHAPTER VIII

FATALISM AND METEMPSYCHOSIS

THE Vedantists held that all their souls have emanated from Brahm. In due time they must return to their source. The interval between emanation and return they called metempsychosis, or soul-wandering, and this was the doom of all souls. This conception is based upon the supposed identity of the soul in different successive bodies, ranging through the whole gamut of animate and inanimate creation. Everything, even a stone, had a spirit, and therefore a human soul was thought capable of inhabiting everything and of living everywhere. This wrong conception arose partly from the belief that the soul was an entity which lived separately inside the body, and which could be removed from one body to another. In modern times the science of psychology proves such a belief to be wrong from start to finish. The dogma of metempsychosis is discredited, and must be given up by the Hindus, as has been done by the modern civilised world.

Another idea connected with this was the belief that when the soul reached Brahmahood it arrived at the end of its wanderings through millions of bodies and millions of years. It then attained absorption into Brahm; and just as a drop of water mingles with the sea, so the soul lost consciousness and all that distinguishes personality. I have already pointed out the error of this conception, so need not enlarge upon it here. The Hindu regarded the "renunciation" of self as the summit of their ambition. The newer faith seeks the "realisation" of self in a sublime Being, as the only way by which the soul or self can reach its fullest personality. Indeed, for this end it was created, and who can prevent its attaining the chief object of its existence in glory throughout all eternity?

Another feature of Hinduism is the universal belief in Fatalism, which has played and is still playing an important rôle in the daily life of the Hindus. This is the outcome of the false religious conception under which the masses are brought up, that all things take place by inevitable necessity. The Monotheistic Religion of Beauty and all higher systems of religion have outgrown this mistaken notion. Fatalism tends to destroy hope, and hence to destroy effort, responsibility, and morality. It impeaches Divine justice, mercy, and love, and seeks to excuse sin. The true view is to realise that we are responsible, with free will to choose and act, and that God has to that extent put our fate into our own hands as co-workers with Himself.

This view rouses us out of our apathy, and inspires us with energy. Under God and with His co-operation we are the architects of our own fortune. As free men we are called upon to fight our way through life manfully, not in the spirit of bravado, but as fellow-workers with God in humility and

trust. "Fate," of which the Hindus complain, and to which they yield, is simply another name for the "difficulties" which meet us all in life, and it is by fighting these that we carve out a path for ourselves in spite of all hindrances, and bend circumstances to our will. When, however, this is impossible, we must bear our trials with fortitude and resignation, knowing that in spite of everything all will turn out for the best, since God is the ruler of our fate. If we do our duty through sunshine or storm, we honour God even in the furnace of our tribulations, and conquer the desponding view of unrelenting fatalism.

CHAPTER IX

MAYA

As regards "Maya," i.e. the delusive and illusive aspects of existence, which you desire to have more fully explained, let me say that the Hindus teach that "Maya" has a twofold effect. In its effect on the soul it brings "delusions," in its effect as regards the external world it brings "illusions"-called respectively Avarana and Wikshepa. I have explained to you already in one of my previous works why this theory was invented and employed by Badrayana in his system of Vedanta. You will find that the Gita follows in its steps and proclaims the world to be an illusion. At the same time, it is admitted even by the Hindus that this world exists for T.

each of us as the sum total of our sense impressions, interpreted by our reasoning and emotional faculties under the controlling notions of time and space. These are the necessary elements of conditioned existence, assimilated in various degrees and intensities according to the intellectual development of each individual.

The Vedantists call this aspect Vyavaharika, or the "practical existence." They will not admit that this sense-world constitutes the Reality, nor that things actually exist as perceived by the senses. They believe that higher intelligences may exist in other realms who apprehend existence in other ways than we do, perhaps more directly and without any sense-mediums whatever, such as we are endowed with. This is very likely the case, but it does not follow that the thinking minds in the respective spheres are under any illusions or delusions whatever, or that God in Nature plays us false.

The error of the Vedantists lies in their

MAYA 163

thinking our earthly existence, indeed the whole phenomenal world, as being illusory or unreal (avastu), a mere phantom conjured up by the Self for its own delusion, a false light, a reign of universal illusion. On the other hand, the transcendental existence is for them the only real substantial world. This state they call Paramarthika. It is, however, dishonouring God for the Vedantists to teach that this spotless and infinitely pure Being of Truth, the origin of all that exists, should have projected a distorted reflection of Himself upon His creation in order to delude His rational creatures. is impossible to accept this far-fetched hypothesis.

Modern thinkers would put it in a different way. They simply conceive the transcendental world as a more highly evolved existence, more sublime and glorious than the earthly one; but both, in their own way, are real, whether it is to Brahm or to the reflecting minds in these spheres. By the law of our being, we may take it that the objective and

subjective sides of our existence, wherever we are, are always adjusted on the immovable basis of "relativity" and "reality"; hence the idea of illusion is ruled out of court. This world is not a dream or a phantom world. It is a stern reality to each and all, and the higher existence towards which we are moving will no doubt be the same, but very probably still more delightful and glorious.

The Vedantists further imagine that "Maya," illusion, will disappear as we reach the transcendental world, because, when this happens, the soul of man and of the whole phenomenal universe will be absorbed into the supreme soul, who will again become the one existing spirit. There will be nothing but Brahm. There is doubtless truth in conceiving God or Brahm as the world's Creator, as the one who is without a second. At the same time, the distinction which exists between the Creator and His creation should always be kept clearly in mind. There is no ground for imagining that a

time will arrive when God will exist without His creation, or that the soul of man will be absorbed in the way imagined by the Vedantists.

Modern thinkers would rather put it that our intuition posits an ideal world towards which we are being evolved in order to reach a higher perfection. There our consciousness, our intellect and emotions, will be raised to their highest potency and activity; there also the soul in a still higher degree will be in a conscious and loving union, a oneness in sentiments and affections with the Supremenot absorbed as the drop of water in the ocean, but ever living an immortal existence as His offspring, loving and worshipping Him, and loved and blessed by Him in return. There is no extinction of our personality or consciousness, but an enlarging and glorifying of it.

In conclusion, we must adhere to the plain fact, that consciousness involves the dualism of subject *and* object. Wherever there is consciousness there is relation, and where there

is relation there is dualism; hence such a blotting out of consciousness into the One, as the Vedantists assume, is unthinkable. If there is absorption, then the Absolute will have become the negation of relations, which cannot be, because the Absolute does not mean One out of relation to existence and life, but One who includes all relations, and in this consists His immanence. As the Creator, there is implied His transcendency, a Oneness without a second.

The Hindu definition of the Supreme Being is a beautiful one, namely, Satchitananda, pure existence, pure thought, and pure joy. From this lofty thought we cannot conceive God as a negation or as a solitary Being. The Hindus maintain that when the soul is delivered from Illusion, it regains its birthright of a blissful though impersonal existence. This conception, however, is not likely to be so near the truth as that which looks upon the soul's future existence as a personal one, perhaps in ethereal form, but in a higher and more glorious state. The impersonal life

in Brahm usually means a total blotting out of the soul's conscious existence. This seems one of the greatest errors in the religious conceptions of the Hindus regarding the future of the soul.

CHAPTER X

MONOTHEISM

As you may have noticed, my criticisms in "Transformed Hinduism" were all in favour of Monotheism or the belief in one God only, conceived by Jesus as a father, full of love and pity for the human race, all of whom are His children and therefore Divine.

The Christian faith in its development absorbed various heathen doctrines. It also incorporated the Alexandrian doctrine of "a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead," which was afterwards interpreted in various ways by the Church Councils. This dogma of a Trinity of "Persons" is gradually losing ground and is discredited by the modern world in its search after truth. This is not the place in which to show how this doctrine arose. The

critical school holds that the origin of each specific Christian belief can be found in preexisting systems; hence the body of Christian doctrines represents a fusion and modification of Jewish and pagan religious cults. Its evolution can be fully accounted for on naturalistic grounds, without invoking the aid of miracles, the belief in which arose during ages of ignorance and superstition. The truth conveyed by the word "Trinity" is, that although God is "One only without a second," yet, in order to bring Him more clearly before human comprehension, He may be viewed in a "Trinity of aspects," such as His transcendency, His immanence, and His supra-Personality. It is still One God, however, who claims our worship, such as was rendered Him by Jesus, who, being a Jew, was an ardent Monotheist throughout his whole life, even until his death on the Cross, where we listen to his last prayer of adoring and filial love to his heavenly Father.

With these preliminary remarks, let us treat of God in the philosophy of the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty from the threefold view we must take of Him in order to bring Him properly within the focus of human cognisance, to grasp Him by the intellect, and also to enshrine Him in the heart.

In the first aspect, that of God's transcendency, He is absolutely inconceivable to any other being but Himself, and with this idea most Hindu thinkers will agree. There must be in God an infinity of perfections of which human beings can have no conception. Therefore, God in infinite ways must transcend the powers of apprehension possessed by finite minds. In other words, God in the first aspect is a Reality transcending man's highest thoughts or ideals. He is the source and the explanation of the Universe, with an infinite plenitude of power and glory, to which, as has been well said, the production of one world or of numberless worlds can add nothing. In short, God is the uncaused cause of all existence and the unitary principle in all multiplicity.

The second aspect, namely, God's immanence

in the world, will also in the main be conceded by all Hindu thinkers, although not a few err in not keeping to the "golden mean" in their speculations. We may describe this second aspect in something like the following outline. The infinite is found within the finite, while yet transcending it. The immanence of God in Nature is shown by the intelligent purpose pervading it. We may therefore posit as an axiom, that the more Nature is studied, the more it will be seen that an all-pervading, all-sustaining, all-evolving God must be its source, its centre, and its end. God is further proved to be immanent in Nature from evidences of His wisdom, power, and love. In this aspect God is to be conceived, not so much as the unchanged Being of existence, as the Manifested one in His ceaseless activity, ever evolving, dissolving, and re-evolving the Universe in higher and more beautiful forms. Therefore this finite Universe must be looked upon as one of God's means for the expression and realisation of His infinite potentialities of love, wisdom, and

power; and the highest realisation ever seen in Humanity is Jesus, who revealed God in His full-orbed beauty of perfect love.

The higher immanence of God in the soul of man has not only expulsive powers to cast out what is imperfect and debased, but also impulsive and expansive powers to widen human sympathies and scatter blessings broadcast over the earth. Furthermore, God's immanence in the soul of man is the highest we know. It is felt as a loving purpose, the inspirer of every good thought and word, of every holy desire and every loving deed. The heart with its most fervent love, the will with its noblest resolves, man's highest aspirations, all arise from God's immanence in the soul. Finally, it is when Divine Love is in the heart that man is brought into complete harmony with the moral and spiritual order under which the soul lives now and will live for ever, for every soul is essentially progressive. This is the soul's true wealth. It is therefore through this personal union with God, who is immanent in the heart as a co-worker, that

the soul begins a continuous and progressive development in self-culture, so that it gradually becomes more like God in His beautiful character, aspirations, and purposes.

Thirdly, let us treat of God's supra-Personality. This is distinguished on the one hand from all forms of Polytheism, to which the one-sided aspect of God's immanence tends, and on the other from pantheistic forms of thought, to which the one-sided aspect of God's transcendency is apt to lead. Supra-Personality is not used in any sense of limitations.

From this third aspect, God is seen, not as an abstraction, but as the active, productive, and supra-personal Supreme Being of the Universe, the inexhaustible source of life and love. As truly as God is incomprehensible in His essence, so truly is God revealed in His manifestations. Evidently all of God is not incommunicable to us, for we exist, we think, we love, we act, and we see everywhere around us evidences of thought, love, wisdom, and power, and an ever-present beauty, which,

as reasonable beings, we must ascribe to the manifestations of a first cause. It is not only God's supra-Personality, but the near and dear relationship which may be established between God and the soul, that draws out man's highest sentiments of love. God becomes to the soul not only an inward model of grace and perfection, but also an inward motive born out of admiration, gratitude, and love, an inward authority, and also an inward constraint and inspiration.

In all higher faiths, this is the underlying idea of the Divine as moral order and spiritual beauty of *character*, the growing idea of moral and spiritual perfection. It is, in fact, an idealisation of the spiritual and moral elements which man finds within his own consciousness. Therefore, to conceive God as a person, we must attribute to Him, to an infinite extent, what constitutes the excellencies of a human soul with its highest thoughts and capacities for love, harmony, and joy. Otherwise, it will be found impossible to bring God in His beautiful attributes within the focus of

the human mind. Yet, the supra-Personal God is not limited, mutable, or imperfect as human personality is. He is infinite and perfect, while the other is finite and imperfect. Still, humanity in one sense is sublime in its very imperfections, in view of its endless progress towards loftier states of being. Humanity is ever reaching towards greater likeness in spiritual beauty and perfection to the Fountain Head; not a progress single-handed, but a co-operation where the perfect Being is the co-worker with the soul of man in the struggle towards a higher, a fuller, a happier life. In this thought the soul finds its consolation, its strength, joy and happiness.

Our conception of God's Personality no doubt fails in fully expressing God's nature, but it is the most complete expression we are capable of formulating. Far removed as it is from an adequate representation of God, every other view is infinitely farther from the truth, for we know nothing higher in this world than human personality. In short, God is the only true and perfect Personality, whereas

in Humanity is found only the potentiality, the embryo of what true and perfect Personality represents.

God's immanence and God's transcendency are two great truths, but they must be supplemented by the equally great truth of God's supra-Personality, in which He is best apprehended by the seeking soul. The belief in the supra-Personality of God has a powerful effect in influencing and drawing the soul in love and obedience to its Maker. True religion springs from the sense of God's personality. This is the starting-point, otherwise we are apt to think of God as the Hindus do of Brahm; or God is confused with His works, as is done by others, who dwell solely on the aspect of God's immanence in the world. We have to interpret God through our personality; indeed, personality is the highest category we can predicate of God. Therefore, although it is true that God is partially reflected in Nature, He is best reflected in the human soul. In this idea of supra-Personality we have the meeting-point

of all philosophies. The conclusion we must form is that there is a necessary and eternal co-existence of the finite and the infinite. We need not try to find out what is the mind *itself* or the Divine *itself*, but rather what is the relation of the two, *i.e.* what God is to us and what we are to God.

Although man may be said to be made in the image of God, it is wrong to say that man is the measure of God, and yet this conception lies at the root of many false theories of God. Only a supra-personal God can satisfy the soul's longings towards a perfect ideal. Likeness to this ideal is the goal of all mental, moral, and religious progress, for God in His beauty and perfection is the presupposition of all elevating ideals of the human soul. The more our souls become moral and spiritual, the higher our personality advances. Our limited individuality is only a temporary form of the soul. The highest perfection is the greatest likeness to God's beautiful and perfect character; hence we look to a transfigured and eternal life as our goal. Man

cannot have his personality absorbed into God, as the Pantheist teaches; nor can God be individualised in man, as the Polytheist teaches; but in a supra-personal God who can sympathise with the soul, he will find an eternal and loving communion, as Jesus taught us. We must expand our thought of man from his present low estate to the transcending aspect of an immortal spirit, with affinities to the Divine Spirit of All, so that both may become one for evermore in the sense of mutual love and spiritual likeness.

The Brahmans read the Infinite and Finite through Nature, whereas the early Aryans read them through personality, which is the proper course to follow. The Infinite must have its counterpart in our own personality, and can be interpreted only in terms of a person. The highest existence is still to us the highest personality.

The Universe is a creation for the service and expression of mind. It is intelligible to the mind because the same Divine intelligence created both man and it. Nature is an intellectual whole as well as a moral and spiritual whole, a system of benevolent foresight and ministration.

By union with God is not meant "absorption," but such a union as shall secure the permanence of man's personality and individuality, and even intensify them. God is the "Absolute" not because of exclusiveness, but because He includes all. To feel that we are one with God is not to be God, as many mystics have affirmed. It only means that God and man are in harmonious adjustment. God would still exist although we did not exist. The Cosmos would still exist although we pass away.

The highest form of Nature known to us is man with his ideals, and his capacity for communion with the source of his being. Thus the earthly life is transmuted into a higher form of life, transcending the present, making it grander, more wonderful, more beautiful.

The true conception of the world is the unitary or monistic one. This conception

keeps equally clear of Pantheism and of Atheism. Idealism and Realism are seen in true perspective from this point of view. It likewise keeps equally clear of "Ontology," which is an over-valuation of reason, and of "mysticism," which is an under-valuation of reason. All existence is one great continuous whole; all differences are but variety in unity, working for progress, for higher developments of Beauty, and for deeper and fuller bliss.

As I have said in another place ("The Drama of the Apocalypse"): "To know the Supreme fully, thousands of avenues would have to be opened to the human mind, of which at present we are in profound ignorance. Human conceptions of the Supreme and of existence in general are at best very fragmentary. This teaches humility, but it also makes us cherish the larger hope that since humanity has reached a higher elevation of being than any other of the manifestations of the Supreme on this globe, vaster possibilities and more glorious ideals lie before it in the illimitable future with surprising revelations of what the

existence of the Supreme really implies and connotes.

"Meantime, in our imperfect language we may postulate the source of our being, and of existence in general, as the living Will and Reason immanent in all law, the living heart immanent in all harmony, beauty, and love. If the Cosmos, as apprehended by man, is the revelation of one of the modes of the Supreme, He is clearly both in the Cosmos and above the Cosmos, both immanent and transcendent, both comprehended under the symbol of personality and raised above personality. Hence the glorious source of all life and being must be inexpressibly higher than human personality and consciousness, although these must in some partial way correspond with and shadow forth the essence of the Supreme. This glorious life of all we therefore define in the last abstraction as perfect wisdom and perfect love with unlimited power, whose life is an eternal act of self-revelation. This is seen in His Immanence in the Cosmos, which He has been evolving through His own selflimitation and self-sacrifice, in order to have His own life of Glory and Beauty multiplied and reflected through all the countless grades of Being—culminating in souls which, by training, grow to be like Him in all His moral perfections, and whose joy and happiness it will be to love and rejoice for evermore, the heart of the Source of their being."

Let me add the following statement to help you in your controversies with Hindus:—

The sevenfold arguments usually employed to establish Monotheism are both deductive and inductive, viz.—

The Cosmological Argument, drawn from the principle of causation.

The Ethical Argument, drawn from moral law and justice.

The Historical Argument, drawn from universal tradition and history.

The Ontological Argument, drawn from abstract reasoning.

The Psychological Argument, drawn from mental and spiritual phenomena.

The Teleological Argument, drawn from evidence of design in the world.

The Providential Argument, drawn from evidence of Divine government.

All these arguments are made still more convincing and unassailable by the intuitional conception in its triple phases, intellectual, æsthetic, and religious. Axiomatic truths are not derived from sensation, but arise from the structure of the mind itself. Hence, by intuition we reach self-evident, necessary, and universal ideas, true for all time and for all places.

As has been well said in this connection: "We reach the knowledge of God not so much by deductive reasoning or inference, as by our intuition, which reveals to the soul an infinite Reality of most glorious attributes underneath all phenomena, a great cosmic life beneath all forces and manifestations, and yet distinct from the Cosmos which He sustains and animates; a Reality, moreover, which is fundamentally kindred to ourselves although transcending our higher conceptions, a Reality

which is one and yet in its unity reveals diversity of operations, while these again are seen under the control of this supreme Unity. God is therefore more than the sum of Reality, contrary to the teaching of Pantheism, seeing that He is not only immanent in Nature and man, but transcends everything past all human comprehension or conception."

Now, as your learned Hindu friends will doubtless acknowledge, by the monotheistic creed is meant the belief in one God only, a self-existent, eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, all-wise, all-perfect, supra-personal Being, who is also immanent and transcendent. His exalted character is perfect in every one of His glorious attributes, among which we can dimly perceive Love, Truth, and Beauty.

In conceiving of the source of all existence, we must remember that we cannot transcend the limits of the phenomenal, nor the limits of thought. We can view the infinite only from the standpoint of the finite, and hence only that part of the Universe can be registered by the medium with which we are equipped.

The rest is beyond us in this life, except as hypothesis. In other words, we cannot know the whole, and therefore cannot judge of the whole. These are to us transcendent mysteries, because they are the doings of a transcendent Being. The Creator is greater than the Creation, the ruler than his laws. The laws of Nature are simply so much as we have discovered of God's method of working. By Him they were ordained, by Him they are sustained, by Him they are enforced. They are rules which God has laid for the regulation of His own procedure. The restraints of God's moral laws are as a fence from evil, for they proceed from His great loving heart. The supreme attribute of God is His Divine love. This is the essence of His Divine character. We discover the goodness of God in the blessings sent and the wisdom of God in the means. Wherever law is, mind is-in other words, there is a lawgiver. If all is under law, it is because all is under God's control. God's immanence in the Cosmos is seen in His laws, which are ceaseless in

their operation, resistless in their application, and benevolent and loving in their purpose. Furthermore, this ultimate Reality contains within Himself the conditions of all existence. The external phenomena which manifest to our consciousness the ultimate reality as "law" reveal behind them reason and will, wherein consists personality. The full idea of personality is realised in perfection only in that Self-Existent One, who both includes and transcends it, and who is therefore best designated by the word "Supra-Personal."

CHAPTER XI

COMMUNION

What I have said about God's personality leads me to add a few words on the soul's communion with God.

We saw that Divine immanence had also to be sought in the soul of man, and that this Divine immanence had a personal aspect, through which alone love arises in the heart of man towards the source of his being. It will be found that it is only by love that man gets power and inclination to shape his life and conduct according to the highest concept he can form of God. Indeed, the essence of love is divine, for the first principle of love is in God. Hence nothing is purer than joy in the possession of the perfect life of love. It is this heart-impelling love which revolu-

tionises life. A new life-centre of heavenborn love is formed, a change of spiritual personality with higher aims and a higher destiny; a spiritual oneness—not a oneness with God in essence, but a oneness with God in spiritual nature, a oneness in common aspirations and common glory.

It is true that man is an organ for the expression of a higher life than aught else around him. Yet God cannot be expressed wholly in us, in our limitations, in our poverty of thought and language. Indeed, the whole Cosmos is a mirror of God, reflecting some rays of His glory, even as the dewdrop, illuminated by the sun, gives back in part his own perfection. In this reflection, Humanity is a much greater debtor than the rest of the visible creation, when we consider its spiritual powers which enable it to respond to higher spiritual forces. In evolution we see the unfolding of a continually increasing power to respond according to the implanted life, which thereby realises itself in a higher mode of being.

These thoughts lead us to another conception taught by the Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty. This is the soul's near and dear relationship to God, the fact that its constant communion with God is the source of its deepest happiness and its true progress in being here and hereafter. It is owing to a deep, all-pervading religious sense combined with the poetic temperament that this conception has taken root in the human race among its choicest spirits.

From the inflow of God's love into our heart results the outflow of our love to others. Hence arises the self-sacrificing disposition which is the essential virtue in the character of every one of His followers. We should love God with all our heart, not only that we may enter into the fulness of joy, but that we may become more earnest in doing His blessed will, more strong in resisting evil, more fervent in spreading the true knowledge of God and in winning others to love and trust Him. By this consecration there is established a personal tie between God and the soul, which cannot

be broken. It fills the soul with a glorious delight in God's ways, and it issues in that true life which seeks to be good and to do good from the best and purest motives.

The Monotheistic Religion presents one God alone as the Creator, the Preserver, and the Ruler of the world. With the warmest affections of the soul God is looked upon also as Love's perfect Ideal and Realisation. this aspect God is not only conceived by the intellect as infinite Cause, Substance, and Power, but the heart conceives Him as the Divine supra-Personal Being, glorious in His perfection, to whom we stand in the relation of lovers or of children, who are all precious to Him. Therefore, in virtue of this august relationship, we are heirs to everything within the boundless possibilities of creative wisdom, love, and power that is for our everlasting good. It is God's moral perfection crowning His infinite intelligence and other attributes that constitutes His unsurpassable glory.

The modern monotheistic faith based upon God's character of perfect love, in which all His other attributes find their fulfilment, we may sum up as follows:—

The highest possible form of religion must be the monotheistic faith in which the one supra-personal and perfect God is the object of worship. The doctrine of a Trinity is rejected as a mischievous error and superstition. Monotheism gives us the best representation of God; it nowhere contradicts reason, and it incorporates all the findings of reason. God must be thought of not merely as "thinking" the Universe, but as "willing and able," for a rational will along with wisdom and love can alone account for the direction of power towards a benevolent end. In Monotheism we get deeper and wider views of God's character and operations. God as infinite Life, as well as infinite Love, unlimited in all His perfection, satisfies the heart and develops the highest affections of which it is capable. While the intellect demands laws, the heart yearns for the response of love.

We can never form a complete and adequate conception of God, who is One and the only

One with absolute perfection, throughout eternity distinct from everything else and immeasurably above all. The conception of God, according as it is nearer to or further from the truth, will necessarily affect a man's religion, and through this his morals also; hence the Hindu proverb, "Thathah diva tatha bhaktah," i.e. "As is God, so is the worshipper." In character we become like the God whom we worship. God's all-wise plans need eternity for their full vindication and realisation, amidst apparent failures as well as successes, losses as well as gains. By the conception of one God of infinite wisdom, justice, power, and love, the soul realises this Being as of infinite majesty and entrancing beauty of perfection, who from love as His motive created a Universe of transcending beauty and loveliness. True Monotheism may therefore be defined as a "religion of beauty," for this sums up God's infinite perfection, His adorable attributes and beautiful character.

If God created the Universe from love as His motive, the final object can only be to advance each of His creatures through discipline to perfection in wisdom, love, and beauty. The idea of God as infinitely beautiful and lovable drives away all fear and mistrust. It awakens in the heart of man the deepest and tenderest affections, admiration towards Him, and a desire to become like Him. The result will be seen in a perfect trust in Him, a perpetual hope with gladsome anticipations. It will give tranquillity and peace of mind, yea, a delight and joy in God, who is realised as the soul's highest good and its infinite benefactor and lover.

Just as God is the only reasonable solution of the mystery of the Universe, so immortality is the only reasonable solution of the mystery of human life. This makes us feel the nobility of our nature as intelligent and moral beings. Before us there stretch vast fields of knowledge, of which our limited faculties are able only to catch a few glimpses in this life. Eternity alone can reveal them to us in their full beauty and glorious reality.

Monotheists concentrate all the powers of

their mind and the affections of their heart upon the one God, whose glory and beauty of perfection inspire admiration, wonder, and delight, while His love and beautiful spirit of self-sacrifice call forth their tenderest affections and adoration. They realise that ineffable power, wisdom and goodness, mercy and love, belong to the very nature of God, and that these are infinitely greater and nobler in Him than the same attributes in man. It has been well said: "God does not expect or wish us to love Him without the best reasons, based upon true knowledge and appreciation of what He is, a knowledge of His rightful claims upon our love, and that nothing less will ever satisfy His tender, yearning heart. In loving is our highest earthly bliss, and we can confer no higher joy or blessing upon another than to give our love. Whatever we do for love is easy and sweet. We are made to love that which is love-worthy. It is therefore easy to love God, so that the only thing which can ever really give us pain is doing and being that which would displease

Him. This is the highest and noblest form of true religion, for the test of love is its mighty power of conquest over all the lower desires and tendencies of our nature."

Monotheism in the Religion of Beauty is therefore that pure, undefiled religious system in which God is adored and loved as the only one to whom worship is due; loved and adored for what He is in Himself. This love leads us to serve humanity for His sake; in other words, we show our love to God by loving our neighbours. Love is the greatest of all joy-bringers, and true religion rests upon love. Every vital religion must therefore express itself, first in purifying and enriching individual character, and then in making all human relations harmonious and mutually helpful. We should help each other to unfold more of the divine within us. This is the goal of spiritual aspiration, and it illuminated the whole life of Jesus.

If we say we are God's image, it can only be to the extent that we respond to and reproduce in our minds that which He has initiated, in order that we may be evolved to higher grades of being. A consecrated life is one which realises itself in a higher life. Man is so constituted that nothing finite can suffice him. Beyond the Universe he is in search of an ideal of beauty, a perfect object of love and adoration. This struggle of man towards the Infinite is the origin of religion. The immortal desire of perfecting and beautifying life bestows new splendour and strength which realises its oneness in nature with an all-perfect, supremely adorable Being distinct from the Universe. It is this near and dear communion with the blessed and adorable God which gives the only pleasure that elevates, the one deep source of happiness that never fails and never palls.

In the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty, the ideal of God's entrancing perfection is set forth as the only means whereby the present life of humanity may be improved, whether in moral, social, industrial, or intellectual progress—in short, in everything that makes for the beauty of life, and for man's advancement

in wisdom. What is important for human progress is an ideal to kindle enthusiasm rather than a power to overawe. Thus the spirit of progress is the essence of religion. The old religions lack this principle of progress. The age-long cosmic progress on this globe is seen to have for its aim the evolution of the supreme wonder of "human personalities" gifted not only with self-consciousness and with consciousness of an objective world, but also with God-consciousness and with longings to be partakers of His glorious nature and to be objects of His eternal love and solicitude.

It is man's essential kinship with God that renders communion with the Highest possible. Unless God is realised, not only as eternal power, but also as eternal goodness and eternal love, He ceases to draw out the soul's affections, for the word "God" means to us the highest and best that is conceivable. Therefore, such a God, the unchanging Reality underlying all phenomena, the infinite source of all being, is alone sufficient in His Almighty Power and daily Providence to strengthen and guide the

soul through this life's pilgrimage to what lies beyond.

Lastly, such a God, who is most glorious in His divine majesty, power, and wisdom, is yet the dearest, the most condescending and soul-satisfying Supreme Being, the One above all, and yet the One to whom the loving soul becomes linked in affection and adoration for evermore. The fatherhood of God is a symbol. It means that the Universe is cradled in love and is the expression of love through processes of development, which often involve sufferings and sacrifices. These, however, are not ends in themselves, but only means for the gradual perfection of the soul, bringing to it true happiness for evermore, and opening up a great and beautiful destiny. In the Universe we see not only a purpose of intelligence, but a purpose of love, because behind it all there is a heart of beneficence and affection.

Upon such lofty conceptions and verities the Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty is built to last for ever. We believe that, as civilisation advances, the monotheistic faith,

based upon God's Love, Beauty, and Joy, as interpreted and realised by Jesus, will be elevated to become the sole Religion of Humanity, after having eliminated erroneous conceptions and superstitions found more or less in all other religious systems. It will contain within itself all that is true and noble in existing faiths, and will thus form a religion acceptable to all men. It will appeal not only to a learned inner circle, but to the whole world, not to reason only, but also to the conscience and to the heart. It will free the mind from the thraldom of despotic ecclesiastical authority, and from the false metaphysical and legendary assumptions of traditional theological systems. It will therefore triumph by its reasonableness and by its true inductions, by its adaptability to the infinite diversity of human characteristics and to human tendencies towards all that is inspiring.

The monotheistic faith of Beauty has its spiritual and abstract side, suited to the philosophical mind. It has also its practical and concrete side, suited to the ordinary mind,

sanctifying every sphere of human relationship, with the world's government in the paths of peace and justice, striving to establish as the goal of humanity a loving brotherhood of man and the reign of love, righteousness, and peace upon the earth as the end of all aspiring endeavours.

Again, this faith has its æsthetic side, suited to the man of poetic feelings and imagination, as expounded in my previous work ("God the Beautiful"). It has also its contemplative side, suited to the man of meditation and prayer. Above all, to the enlightened religious mind, the worship of one God manifested to the soul as Love and Beauty, Justice and Truth, Wisdom and Power, is the only true religion.

This monotheistic faith rejects the worship of all other Gods or Divinities under whatever name known in polytheistic worship. It rejects all substitutes or so-called divine incarnations, redeemers, or sin-bearers. It rejects prayers to angels or demons, and all saint, image, and idol worship. It rejects, lastly, the belief in a Trinity, which has become part

of the worship of so many religious systems, to the dishonour of God.

The worship of one supreme God as promulgated in the Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty, gives unity and purpose to life, and brings the finite everywhere into due subordinate harmony with the Infinite. This glorious Divine Being is the inner Unity, the source and soul of all that is; God, blessed for evermore.

In summing up, let me say that the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty gives us:—

- A Theory of the Universe, based upon science.
- A Principle of Ethics, based upon justice and goodwill.
- A Motive for Worship, based upon love to and admiration of God, based also upon His flawless beauty of character and His inconceivable perfection.

This sublime faith gives the soul true and lasting satisfaction, and points the way to its eternal happiness and glory.

Owing to the tremendous importance of the subject, and as a chief and powerful aid for the conversion of the Hindu polytheistic worshippers, I have written you fully, and from various points of view, of the doctrine and teaching of Monotheism, the faith of Jesus.

I am convinced that this is the foundationstone upon which the true Christian missionaries must build, with hopes of success for the conversion of India to their own precious faith. Unless they do so with ardour and intelligence, they may as well stay at home and leave India to be converted by the Mohammedans to the imperfect teaching of Monotheism in which they believe, but which is only found in its beauty and perfection in the religion of Jesus.

CHAPTER XII

REFORMS IN INDIA

I SHALL now try to sum up what has gone before.

The transformation of India in its civil, economic, and national aspects has been already discussed. The British Aryans have been wonderfully successful in restoring peace, order, and security in India. Remember, they have multiplied the avenues of work and industry, and created material wealth which has spread to all classes. They have raised to a considerable extent the standard of living, although in this respect they are still on the threshold of a mighty problem. They have made all equal before the law, and introduced strict and impartial justice. They have advocated progress in every direction to bring

India into line with the modern world and enable it to benefit from Western civilisation. They have introduced democratic ideas to counteract the intense conservatism and aloofness which distinguish the caste system and the whole society of India. Thus the Hindus are gradually getting a larger share of selfgovernment as they are fitted for it, although perhaps not so rapidly as many of them would Naturally they are anxious to occupy positions of trust and responsibility, and have a more direct management in the affairs of their country; and to this no doubt they are entitled where their attainments, character, and patriotism qualify them for high promotion. In a country like India, however, with so great a variety of races, religions, customs, and languages, where mutual jealousies and animosities, arising from these and similar causes, are so rampant among the natives, it may be doubted whether meantime it would benefit India to replace British officials in positions of importance by natives, unless it were done very cautiously. Changes in the administration of affairs are no doubt inevitable as modern education spreads among the masses, but, to be successful and for the good of the country, these must come very gradually.

The Government of India will in all likelihood have to face a period of great difficulty during the transition stage through which the country is passing. As you know, every year adds to the large number of young Hindus who are educated in India or in England, imbibing British ideas of liberty which they do not find in operation in their own country as regards its government. The education of the natives has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. We find, for instance, that the embryo of national aspirations is beginning to take shape, and although the political ideals of honest reformers should receive proper support in order to give the nation gradually increased power of self-government, it is to be feared that an unlimited freedom of speech and of the press would give the discontented and disloyal classes the coveted opportunity of preaching doctrines to the lower castes

which result in sedition, anarchy, outrage, and crime. If this should be so, no doubt our watchful Government would promptly suppress such freedom, and adopt the best means for protecting the nation at large, with whose safety it is charged. It would be well advised, however, to take prompt steps to remove the just causes of discontentment, so as to secure the confidence and support of the moderate party of reform, as well as of those friends of peace and good government who have the welfare and progress of India at heart. Reform must be built on an orderly and legitimate basis. In other words, it must proceed by evolution, not by revolution.

The safest guarantee of British rule in India is a contented people, and nothing has contributed more to this than the splendid but unobtrusive work of the officials of the British Civil Service. These deservedly rank very high among all classes of the natives for impartiality and incorruptibility in dispensing justice, and for ability in ruling with fairness and prudence. They have helped forward the

development, the peace and prosperity, of the Empire, and deserve to be held in high honour.

As regards the remoulding and transforming of the religious condition of India through the system known as the "New Hinduism," this will naturally be a much slower progress, for the ideals which dominate the East are in some important respects widely different from those advocated in the Christian Religion of Spiritual Beauty. Besides, the East glories in the past, and is especially tenacious of its ancestral faiths, rules, and customs. To move such people from their old anchorage is a formidable task, and time is required. Nevertheless, attempts have already been made by zealous and learned Hindus to reform their ancient religion by removing the gross superstition of the masses along with their many false conceptions, which include faith in the efficacy of idol-worship, incarnations, and so forth.

The battle-cry of these reformers has been "Back to the Vedas," and so far they have

been wise. If this were acted upon, a grand reformation would be accomplished-not of so complete a character as that advocated by the Monotheistic Religion of Christianity, still an important step in the right direction. will see this more clearly if you realise that by studying carefully their ancient Vedas, upon which they look with the utmost reverence as divine utterances, the Hindu seekers after truth would find that there is no reference therein to idol or saint worship, to an oppressive caste system, to transmigration of souls, to fatalism or absorption; no belief that the world has been given over to demons or evil spirits; no pessimism, no Shraddas; no belief in the worthlessness of the human body or in submission to the despotism of a priesthood, which assumes a divine birthright and a divine authority; no enforcement of any disabilities connected with widowhood; no compulsion in respect of early marriages; no trace of any merits in connection with asceticism or self-mutilation.

You will therefore see the importance of

the religious movement of "going back to the Vedas" in order to reform Hinduism. those colossal errors were removed, how easy would it be to induce the Hindus to reform their current religious system still further by absorbing into it the Religion of Spiritual Beauty represented by reformed Christianity, which, after all, is based upon the same lofty principles and the same religious instincts as those of the ancient Aryans, but revised, refined, and brought to perfection through the light thrown by Jesus upon God, Nature, and Man. In this way, for the first time in the history of this ancient country, a popular and true religion of Monotheism would be established. It would differ in some respects from Mohammedanism, inasmuch as the Religion of Spiritual Beauty is based upon a higher conception of God's lovable character. The Mohammedans look upon their Allah as an Oriental despot, who exacts unquestioned obedience like a king from his soldiers. The Christian Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty, on the other hand, looks upon God as Love's Perfect Ideal and expression, who is obeyed without compulsion or fear.

Faith realises that there will be established in India a higher religious system, a synthesis of Transformed Hinduism and Reformed Christianity, which will be without fear, without a narrow despotic caste system, without Pantheism or Polytheism, without idolatry or devil worship, without low and unworthy conceptions of God, without a degrading worship arising from superstition and ignorance, without belief in the transmigration of the soul or its unconscious absorption. It will be a religion which will not require astrologers, charmers, devil dancers, exorcists, or ascetics, or even the worship of divine Avatars. This latter conception has been, and still is, the means of diverting the love, reverence, and worship of humanity from the eternal, ever-blessed God, to mediators who were imagined to stand between Him and humanity. The idealistic faculty of mystic devotees has raised some of the so-called incarnations in human form to the rank of the Godhead, as direct sharers of

God's Divinity. In this way He has been practically relegated to the background, His sublime and beautiful character has been misunderstood and defamed. The devotion and love of Humanity have been given to others. The Christian Religion of Spiritual Beauty grieves with a profound grief over this. The Hindus must learn the duty of casting away all these degrading, God-dishonouring conceptions, and learn from the Parsees, the Mohammedans, the Jews, and the Christian followers of the Religion of Spiritual Beauty, to worship one God only, the one great Reality. They will thus erect a pure Monotheism without false assumptions, and without the dogma of a Trinity, which is only a remnant of ancient Polytheism in a refined form.

When this is done, all idol-worship and superstitions will cease as regards the worship of intercessors, mediators, angels, saints, idols, priests, or spirits dwelling in inanimate or animate nature. As there is only one glorious sun in our system upon which all the planets and asteroids depend, so in the spiritual world

the soul has but one glorious Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, who must be the only object of divine worship. No one else can aspire to Him or pretend to share His dignity, honour, and majesty. The minds of the Hindus must be lifted up to the clear conception of one absolute perfection, to the unity of the Cosmos as one system with only one supreme mind and heart regulating it. After all, Monotheism is a primitive belief. As pointed out already, we find it in the worship among the early Aryans. We find it more especially among the Iranian race, who in Persia under Zoroaster rose to the height of a pure Monotheism and thus became the foster-mother of this exalted and true faith to the Jews, to the Mohammedans, and let us hope by-and-by also to the Christian sects in the new Reformation to be inaugurated among the foremost believers in the purity of worship. As has been well said: "We must uphold the absolute unity of the Divine Creator and suffer no created thing or being to usurp His sovereignty or share His Godhead. We must

worship Him alone and thoroughly set our face against every form of creature worship, whether imagined to be divine incarnation or not."

Polytheism must also work its way back into the pure light of a religious and philosophical Monotheism. As the higher and nobler faiths in the world show the true way, these lower phases of worship will also, when enlightened, follow the lead. Then, for the first time in the history of humanity, will true religion be established all over the world, and the foundation laid of the belief and worship of one God, blessed for evermore. Then shall come to pass the fulfilment of the aged Seer's vision in Patmos when the voice proclaimed to the listening Universe of men and angels the command, "Worship God," i.e. "One God only."

The world's spiritual benefactors and religious reformers should be revered, but on no consideration should they ever be worshipped as gods incarnate. This is refined idolatry, and must be given up for ever. Their beau-

tiful characters and maxims may be worth following, so far as these coincide with our highest conceptions of God's nature; otherwise, such earthly reformers must be given their appropriate place.

Never will the world reach the highest spirituality until Monotheism pure and simple is established upon the earth, and to God alone is given all the honour and glory. Never will Christianity gain triumphs in India or in the rest of the world, which otherwise might be its due, until its faith also has been purged of its mark of inferiority in comparison with purer systems. If this were done (and its founder, that most ardent Monotheist, that most lovable and beautiful soul, a bright image in human form of God's divine beauty, would surely give his blessing), then the faith of Christianity, purified and progressive, would also be transformed along with Hinduism into a Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty, and become in the hands of the Aryan races the conquering faith of the world. May God hasten that day! It will be the dawn of a

new, a glorious civilisation for the whole of mankind, which will gradually reach the highest physical, mental, ethical, and spiritual excellence. God will be worshipped direct without any intermediaries, and with an open vision.

The highest service any one can offer humanity is to give it a true and radiant ideal of God, making Him more attractive and more lovable, for in this lies the soul's ultimate salvation and exaltation. Further, life's unrealised possibilities will be seen to be prophecies of a higher state beyond this earth, where these shall have undreamt-of fulfilments in the soul's development of gifts and graces. Our present life, with its daily struggle between the lower and the higher nature, and with its chilling environments, will be seen to have been justified. Our souls will ultimately attain to fuller and nobler self-realisation, of which the present existence is only a short but necessary prelude. In other words, the soul is placed in an infinite Universe, and its splendid destiny is to expand in everything lovely, true, and good, growing more and more into the transcending beauty of God's moral and spiritual character. It will thus enter into a fuller, closer, and dearer communion with God the Beautiful, who, though ineffably sublime, is yet the soul's divine lover and benefactor, and this for evermore.

I will close with a few additional remarks.

It is for the modern reformers in India to select from their ancient literature all its treasures of wisdom and truth, of spiritual and moral beauty, and incorporate these into a transformed Hinduism, omitting all that is erroneous and all that belongs to lower civilisations gradually passing away. The high hopes entertained in India some years ago for the success of the party of reform, which sought to bring the Hindus back to the primitive faith of the Vedas, have not been realised. Progress has been slight, for schism has weakened the movement. One of the reasons, however, must be traced to the Reformers placing their reliance on the "divine inspiration" of the Vedas. Among many

things true and beautiful, there is a great deal in them that is erroneous and belongs to an earlier civilisation of the world's childhood. which humanity has now outgrown. By pinning their faith to the Vedas as infallible divine utterances, every line being Brahm's revealed word, the Reformers have also played into the hands of the priestly caste, which bases its claims and credentials of infallibility and divinity upon these sacred books. So long as the Vedas are regarded by the Hindus as divine and infallible, so long will the Brahmans be able quietly to retain their selfappointed rôle as India's spiritual dictators, and keep the headship of the caste system. Education ought to be compulsory in every stratum of society from the highest to the lowest. The reasoning faculty should be developed, imagination should be restrained. The ignorance of the lower classes is appalling, but as modern knowledge gains ground among them the superstition of implicit faith in their priests, soothsayers, magicians, charmers, and astrologers will give way, and the influence

of these will gradually be weakened. At present little more than five per cent. of the population can read or write.

The British Aryans ought also to ameliorate the conditions of existence, especially of the agricultural classes, which constitute more than three-fourths of the entire population. They live mostly in poverty, often bordering upon starvation. Little progress can be expected in their advance towards civilisation, and in the introduction of a purer faith among them, until the standard of living has been raised, to enable them to give their children a proper education and to live in comfort under sanitary conditions. Meanwhile they live in their low estate, as they have lived for untold ages, caste-bound, idolbound, custom - bound, priest - bound, and poverty-bound. Until these chains are removed, things among them, whether secular or sacred, will remain very much as they are.1

¹ The last census recorded 74 main castes, and that the vast aggregate of peoples were speaking 185 different languages and dialects.

As Western science and modern conceptions gain ground among them, the slavish fear of evil spirits and evil influences will disappear. This, indeed, has rested upon India as a nightmare for centuries. A brighter outlook upon life will be the result, and as they try with more energy to improve their lot in life, the readier will they be to embrace a higher faith, such as the Christian Religion of Spiritual Beauty, and so learn of a pure Monotheism and of the everlasting love of God toward them. With the vision of His matchless beauty of character before them, which they are called upon to imitate, they will realise that in this lies their true happiness now and for ever. If such lofty conceptions are instilled into the minds of the Hindus, the "fear" of their gods will pass away as an evil dream, and the love of the true God will take its place. If evil spirits are not at the helm of affairs to do them harm, by-and-by they will give up propitiating or worshipping them. All idol-worship and other superstitions will disappear for the

same reason, and their hearts will rejoice in the freedom gained.

The Hindus conceive human life to be an illusion, and death a spiritual suicide. The higher faiths teach that our life here is the starting-point towards perfection. Thus we come to realise our true Self, which is to become more and more like God in all the fulness of His beautiful character.

Introspective contemplation which leads to idle quietism, or to dreamy sentimentalism, or to vacant asceticism, should be given up, not only as useless for all beneficent purposes, but as weakening the fibre of character. Right meditation should lead not only to a higher inward culture and a more intense consecration to God's service, but also to an active philanthropic spirit, manifested in daily life by working for the progress of humanity. In this practical direction we find the best solution of many problems of life.

In India, where Brahmanism represents the aristocratic element, the Ascetics represent the democratic element. Members of any one of

the castes may join the Ascetics. To a great extent their life of renunciation, which embraces a strict self-control over desires, as well as the reduction of one's wants to the barest necessities of life, has become the popular ideal admired in a holy man, and not without Hence the genuine Ascetics some reason. have become the guides, counsellors, and leaders of the common people all over India. They look with disdain upon the exalted of the earth, their riches, their rank and display. Hence they despise Europeans, whose only object in coming to India, whatever cloak they assume, is believed to be their enrichment at the expense of the wretched ryots.

Unfortunately, the lower strata of society are gradually being shifted from their old moorings as regards many of their industries, and the craftsmen are being ruined by European importation of cheaper, machine-made goods; hence the present agitation under the name of "Swadeshi," which means to boycott all imported goods. Only home-made articles are bought, and besides this, protection is

claimed from the Government for Indian products to restore the ancient home industries. This is likely to become a serious problem, for it is computed that in one trade alone, namely, the weaving trade, there are more than ten million handloom weavers employed, for whom weaving is their hereditary employment. In the altered state of affairs these people are gradually being ousted by machine-made products from Great Britain and India, and the result is that they are more or less out of work. Nor are they able to fall back upon agriculture or upon other trades, as these are already overcrowded. Handloom weaving is only one of the trades threatened with extinction; there are many others in the same condition. Hence the Swadeshi movement, which has been started by the general native public to save, if possible, the various "home industries" by a kind of voluntary protection. Both from philanthropic and patriotic motives, this movement has much to commend itself.

Another movement is also silently making its influence felt throughout educated India.

This is called "Swaraj," which stands for "Home Rule." It desires to see the government of the country vested in the hands of the natives as far as civil rule is concerned, only the military control being left in the hands of the British, with all Imperial questions set apart for decision at Westminster. This movement, however, with so many conflicting interests at work, arising from caste, creed, &c., has little chance of success, except partially and in course of time, when India is further advanced and fit to be entrusted with a colonial or similar system of government.

You will see, then, that India has begun to have its share not only of industrial troubles, but also of political unrest, and as years advance both may be a source of great anxiety to the Crown, unless managed by wisdom, forbearance, and firmness. Such being the case, you can understand that the Ascetics, who are the friends of the poor, down-trodden workers, look with great disfavour upon the expansion of the industries of India through labour-saving machinery, especially by Euro-

peans or Parsees, who erect large mills and factories where thousands of native labourers, men and women, are compelled from necessity to work for a living, but at a pittance of wages, while the capitalists acquire enormous wealth. It is unfortunately the case everywhere in the modern industrial world, that the capitalists after paying wages generally think they are absolved thereby from further interest in their work-people, whom they leave to shift for themselves. This would not happen if the rich considered wealth as given not for self-indulgence or for hoarding, but chiefly as a sacred trust for the good of others under them and for society at large.

There are many social evils, clearly attributable to faulty economic organisations. Now, the right adjustment of social relations can only be made by acting upon the principles of justice, truth, charity, and co-operation. Assuming these, there would gradually be an amelioration in the condition of those who in every stratum of society suffer from ignorance, selfishness, and sin, for these three are

the real foes of man's happiness and progress. In proportion, therefore, as humanity is enlightened and becomes the expression of Divine Love, there will be created a type of loving men and women filled with the spirit of unselfishness and sympathy, to bless humanity and bring heaven nearer to earth in the spirit of Jesus.

Following up these remarks, let me add that what is most urgently wanted in modern society is a more equal distribution of wealth by the introduction of a brotherhood of cooperation and mutual help. In India something of this nature is already in partial operation in the caste regulations. It has also begun to make some progress in the industrial systems of Europe and America. Society should be imbued with the spirit of pity, mercy, and helpfulness, which will bring aid to the helpless and homeless. In short, devoted men and women are needed who will take to heart the sins and sorrows of the world, remove its bitterness and spread blessings around them. They are God's true

representatives upon earth, and they will surely feel the sunshine of God's love and approval in their own souls.

The Ascetics believe that renunciation or detachment from the world is the only possible mode of a holy life, whereas the Religion of Spiritual Beauty seeks it by an altruistic and personal life, based upon love and devotion to God. It believes that the health and progress of the soul are possible only by keeping the body and all its powers in their highest condition. Therefore, the true renunciation should be habitual moderation and abstinence from evil.

Thanks to the spiritual discernment of the ancient Brahmans and the bent which was given by them to the mind of the Hindus through many centuries, the whole of orthodox India realises clearly that this world is after all not the only one, nor indeed the principal one, worth consideration. Spiritual wealth of character is the only enduring treasure worth striving after, seeing its possession constitutes man's highest glory and honour both in this life and in the life to come. The Hindus, to

their praise be it said, still cling to the ancient belief that this world is only a short school of preparation for a higher and nobler existence. Hence it has been truly remarked that the coming spiritual struggle in India lies between the forces which make for the accumulation of wealth and those which make for the renunciation of the world.

In the Christian Monotheistic Religion of Spiritual Beauty, which follows the golden mean and reconciles these two extreme views, will be found the path of safety, the way of wisdom, the true road to the welfare both of the soul and of the body. If once Divine love dwells in the soul, it will bring us into complete adjustment with the moral order under which we live. The longing of the soul for perfect salvation will be attained when there is perfect knowledge with perfect obedience, and only eternity can give us these.

In proportion, however, as God's spirit of wisdom and love permeates humanity, to that extent will life be made purer, richer, and sweeter. Its blessed influence will be felt

everywhere. In the world of politics, it will awaken aspirations after improved forms of government, founded upon freedom and progress in the interests of peace and harmony. Conferences, conciliation, and arbitration will be extended to international disputes, and will prove as successful as these have been in labour disputes. The age of militarism is passing, and the way is cleared for industrialism and the progress of science, upon which the civilisation of the future will chiefly rest. In the industrial world, longings will be awakened for improved conditions of living, and competition will be replaced by co-operation. In the artistic, literary, and scientific worlds, truth, beauty, and learning will be pursued with greater ardour and with higher motives, to instruct, delight, and bless mankind. Law will be based not only upon justice, but also upon love and mercy. In the social world, goodwill and brotherly helpfulness will be more universally cultivated, as becometh those who are children of a loving Father in heaven. In church life, there will be more

earnest strivings for social service and for the development of our higher nature, with consecration to God the Beautiful, who will become the sole object of the worship of humanity. In the family circle, there will be a closer knitting together of the ties of affection which bind the home circle in a loving community of ideals and purposes for the good of each and all. The kindest words and looks, the gentlest manners, and the most willing help will be kept for the dear ones at home, and more especially for the weak, the sick, and the old. Lastly, in the individual life, desires will be awakened to cultivate the life beautiful in daily intercourse and conduct, in imitation of God's own life of transcending beauty. In short, in proportion as God inspires the individual and society, to that extent there will be at work the expulsive power which dislodges evil habits, strife, and selfishness, and which purifies the heart. There will also be at work the impulsive power which sends men forth full of enthusiasm to conquer the world for God by personal services and

sacrifices; and lastly, there will be at work the expansive power which widens human sympathies, reveals a higher vision of the world, and leads us into fellowship with the larger Universe to which we belong, where God is seen more fully as the One in All, as well as the One above All.

After this short digression let us resume our subject.

Many reforms are still needed in India, such as the restriction of early marriages and the granting of permission to widows to remarry. Artificial barriers must also be broken down which keep the people apart and prevent the rise of the spirit of a universal brother-hood of man. Instead of labour being thought a misfortune or a curse, as it is by most Hindus, it will be considered, as Western ideas gain ground, honourable and the greatest blessing to all people in health and strength. Then some six millions of religious beggars or mendicants who now infest India, and live without compunction upon the poor ryots and

others, a heavy drain upon the industrious population, will learn the dignity and honour of work, as being more acceptable to God than their life of idleness and beggary. In case of need, public authorities should compel these mendicants to work for their living, and thus add to the country's earning power.

The British Aryans march in the van of human civilisation. They have harnessed to the car of progress all that is great and glorious. They will yet inspire their timid kinsmen in India with courage to overcome difficulties and feel themselves superior to most of the blind forces of Nature, by using them for the promotion of their own health and welfare.

Steam, electricity, and other powers are already at the command of humanity, and the triumphs of the soul have only just begun. The reactionary forces and the intense conservatism of India will gradually disappear. India will be enlightened and lifted from its present apathy and stagnation, from fatalism and superstition.

The Christian and monotheistic religion of

physical, moral, and spiritual Beauty will slowly raise humanity out of moral and spiritual darkness to the bright, the beautiful, the gladsome light shed by Jesus over time and eternity. It will ultimately triumph, because it offers mankind so magnificent a prospect of lofty attainments, so wide a field of spiritual vision, whereby we may rise into oneness with that higher Self, which is life indeed, because it is eternal love.

Lastly, Hinduism will be transformed when all that is beautiful, true, and in harmony with the pure and loving spirit of Jesus has been gathered together and treasured from the ancient literature of India, and all that is ignoble and degrading has been left behind as an unclean thing fit for destruction and oblivion. Then India will have laid the foundation-stone of its ancient faith, which, as we saw in my previous work ("Transformed Hinduism"), was a belief in one God as our heavenly Father and in the soul's near relation to and loving communion with Him. These two fundamental truths had been lost to the

Hindus for millenniums, but were rediscovered by Jesus, who therefore stands forth to them as the true spiritual descendant of their venerable Rishis and the merciful Buddha. He may well represent to them their last Avatar, for whom they are looking, and who is to bring in his train all blessings with a new heaven and a new earth.

The glorious day is drawing nigh when transformed Hinduism and transformed Christianity, one in the faith and the spirit of Jesus, will stand forth to the world as a temple of fairest proportions and of enchanting beauty. The faith of the whole of humanity will be summed up in the world's short creed as promulgated by Jesus, namely:—

I believe in the fatherhood of God.

I believe in the brotherhood of man.

I believe in living the life of love as Jesus and all like-minded have ever lived it for God and man.

In this summary you have India's loving message and greeting to Great Britain and to the Church of Christendom.

THE BRIGHT FUTURE

Let me close with a few words. Our attention has been mostly engrossed with events connected with the rise of the Christian faith and the religious life and ancient beliefs of the Hindus.

Now, having come to an end with these studies, let us turn our attention for a little to the present time, some nineteen centuries later, and mark what are the prospects in the coming ages for the triumph of true religion as introduced and exemplified by Jesus Christ.

The leaven of his spiritual teaching of love and brotherhood, with the golden rule as its working principle, has quietly done its work during these millenniums, permeating more or less humanity so far as it has come under its influence.

As we look back upon the past millennium and look around upon the world of to-day, all lovers of mankind may well take courage and rejoice at the marvellous progress in all directions which is observable everywhere as the result of the spiritual and intellectual freedom gained for us by Jesus Christ.

This is all the more joyful and encouraging to elderly persons who, like myself, have passed beyond the allotted span of threescore years and ten, and therefore may soon expect to receive the "home call" to leave this world with all its interesting problems. Now, what are the chief elements of the joyful prospects which the future holds in store for us? Are they not primarily that the beautiful, loving, and self-sacrificing spirit of Christ is evidently seen to be in the ascendancy everywhere, bringing to the forefront the modern conception of the "Social" Gospel as being the absolutely necessary complement to the "Individualistic" Gospel which has reigned so long. Hence we see the many noble and enthusiastic efforts which are nowadays being made towards the betterment of the world, so as to evolve a fairer social state, a healthier, purer, and more consecrated life in the community for the realisation of the ideal of brotherhood and brotherliness, where the "spiritual" Socialism

of active brotherly love is the only true basis for "economic" Socialism. We come also to realise the duty and the privilege of living more in one another, rise with one another and attain in one another—learn, in short, to measure our growth in grace by the degree in which our selfishness is swallowed up in love to God and man.

Yes, the Christ-likeness is shown by a progressive elevation of the world's ideals, with the widening and clarifying of its vision, with the purification of its motives, with the expansion of its sympathies, and with the increase of its spiritual powers as an agency for good and an instrument by which the Divine will be better realised in the world.

True Christianity is a divine optimism, and as a result it creates enthusiasm for the cause of God, of humanity, and of a higher and better life upon earth to all the sons and daughters of men. In short, the Christ-life makes for true happiness to individuals as to society at large, it solves every problem which can present itself to the aching heart, as it

did to Jesus, bringing to it also the joy of fellowship with God, our dear Father, with all the blessings which that means for time and eternity. Therefore, summing up the result of our studies, may we not confidently look for the extended triumph of the Redeemer's reign over the whole world in ages yet to come?

The divine purpose of Jesus Christ was the perfection and happiness of human society as a fraternal commonwealth in which all should have freedom, health, abundance, and peace, just in proportion as it freed itself from the barbarism, grovelling passions, and selfishness which had enchained it in the past.

The law of life consists, therefore, in having right relations to our environments, and if that law is followed we shall have righteousness, peace, love, and joy—indeed, only in this way will our life be brought into unity and harmony with the eternal whole.

In conclusion, let me say that the "Church Universal" will be the depositor of all ancient wisdom and truth, as also the depositor of all modern science, enterprise, and progressive thoughts, which will harmonise reason and faith. Thus the "Church Universal," after having assimilated and purified all other creeds, will be one of a synthesis in the higher harmonies of faith and science, of meditation and action, of beauty and truth, of wisdom and worship, of love and service.

"Converted India," with its 300 millions of souls, will in that day take its place in the world as one of the chief leaders of the religious, philosophical, and scientific thoughts, as well as of the aspirations of the world, so as to make it in verity and truth holier and happier to the Glory of God and the welfare of humanity.

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co. Edinburgh & London

Some Press Opinions on the Author's Earlier Works

The Drama of the Apocalypse

"This remarkable volume deals with a considerable portion of the book of the Revelation. The author develops the plan of interpretation with skill, resource, and enthusiasm. He has produced an interesting, indeed a captivating volume."—The Literary World.

"All the questions as they emerge in this work are treated with great ability and literary attractiveness. The work throws a flood of light upon a portion of Scripture which to general readers has hitherto been mysterious and inexplicable. It should also induce theologians to deal in a more definite and practical manner with the book of Revelation than is customary with them."—Dundee Advertiser.

"The work before us brings out very clearly many of the beauties in the book of Revelation, and shows how the contents of the book in general may be used for homiletical purposes. There is at times a sublimity and grandeur in its style and phraseology well in keeping with the subject to be expounded and applied. We believe that no one can read it without being mentally and spiritually bettered."—

Leeds Mercury.

Transformed Hinduism (two vols.)

"The work is rich in its research, its happy summaries of ancient Indian writings, and its bright modernism, all culminating in the simple but profoundly inspiring thought that the human and the divine are very closely related, and that there are no barriers between God and the soul. It is this thought that gives the key to these volumes, which fittingly end with a charming section on 'Death and Immortality.'"—Light.

"This work is well written, and gives a comprehensive view of Brahmanism, of the sacred scriptures; Hindu philosophical systems, the Hindu epics, and modern Hinduism."—The Times.

"The writer of these interesting little volumes possesses a wide knowledge of the history of India, and has used that knowledge to excellent purpose in the study of the Aryan religious systems and philosophical speculations. The author presents the development of India's religious thoughts from the earliest times in a highly intellectual manner."—Journal of the Royal Colonial Institute.

"These pretty volumes, tastefully got up, bear a title which is likely to repel many who would otherwise be interested readers. The actual contents of a large part of the work are devoted to the history of Indian religion, and to description, analysis, and criticism of Hindu sacred writings and systems of philosophy.

"The chapters give a clear and pleasantly written survey of subjects which ought to have considerable attraction for the English public, and information about which is not very accessible in a popular form. The wonderful intellectual activity of the Indian

Aryans is well delineated.

The writer seems to have read widely and deeply, and has an enviable gift of imparting the result of his studies in readily intelligible and well-chosen language. Many a beautiful thought wedded to beautiful words is to be found in the positive teaching of Transformed Hinduism."—The Baptist.

"God the Beautiful"—An Artist's Creed

Translated into Japanese, Italian, and German

"The writer finds a manifestation of 'God the Beautiful' in Nature, in the soul of man, in all acts of human love and courage. The book contains many suggestive, original, and beautiful thoughts. Future theology, he thinks, will grow out of the doctrine of the Beauty of God. The new faith will be more orthodox than the old, because it does fuller justice to the essence of the Divine character of love and beauty; it will also insist upon the truth that humanity in its essence is Divine, that love pure and ever-flowing is at the heart of the universe."— Church Quarterly Review.

"This choice little book deals with various aspects of beauty, not only in a poetical but in a philosophical manner, leading up to the wondrous beauty of God Himself. The absorption of the mind of the author in the idea of beauty is witnessed by the clear, pellucid style of his writing. It flows on like a charming

poem, rich in its ideas and suggestions, and winning the heart as well as the mind of the reader."—The Baptist.

"A sweet little volume, it abounds in beautiful epigram, and has a truly elevating style and tone."—

The Examiner.

"Altogether this little volume is distinctly good reading. It shows how rich a matter religion is when rationally and asthetically interpreted, and whoever reads the book will be better and wiser for

doing so."-Bradford Observer.

"A reflection of the delicacy and charm which pervades Keats' poetry is to be found in his letters, which prove that to a personality like that of the writer, the small things of earth, which most men pass unobserved, have in them infinite consolation, and tend, happily for the suffering, to the conviction that the future has in store the fulfilment of brighter promise."

—Nottingham Daily Guardian.

"This lovely little book is all about Poetry, Music, and Art. On these lofty themes we will try to give a summary of the fine thoughts that breathe through

this book."-Light.

"A charming book. Art, music, nature, love, and life are all dealt with as expressions of Deity and beauty, and the writer in a fresh, philosophic, poetical, and graceful manner presents his ideas in a way which not only carries conviction, but awakens thought and enlarges the reader's mental outlook."—Dundee Advertiser.

"This is an attractive little book which is well worth reading. The author defines the final religion,

the sum and climax of all the rest, as the worship of the one God, who is the God of Love and Beauty."— The Guardian.

"A beautiful book within and without."-The Har-

binger of Light.

The writer undoubtedly had the soul of an Artist. He not only appreciated the beautiful in every order, but had set his mind to analyse that beauty; to study the various elements that harmoniously conspire to produce it, and by a mental synthesis to re-create for himself the object that had charmed him. The face of nature, painting, sculpture, poetry, the drama, music, had all furnished subjects for his study and contemplation, and much that was beautiful in them had become indelibly stamped upon his mind and imagination. The grandeur and sublimity of those thoughts are enhanced by the beauty of the language and the richness of illustration in which they are expressed."

—The Catholic Review.

"In this bonnie book in white and gold God is the Beautiful, and artists, poets, and sympathetic honest livers are all helping the race to reach the goal of perfection. When the race has learned how to surround itself with beauty in every sphere of life, and life itself, in thought and conduct, becomes an expression of the beautiful, then will the problem of existence have been solved, and man will face the unknown beyond the tomb with cheerful confidence, as leading to a fuller development of the life he has lived here. Music, poetry, and art are all meant as aids to the realisation of an altruistic life, which will find its happiness in service. No one can read the volume

without being strengthened on the neglected ethical side of his being; and style, type, and binding all combine to make the reading a pleasure."—The Labour Leader.

"These letters treat of various questions in religion, the arts, and literature, and are evidently the compositions of a devout mind and cultivated intellect. The volume is beautifully printed and tastefully bound."—Publishers' Circular.

Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship

"This book gives an interesting account, well studied, in the actual life of the East, and of the theological atmosphere in which Christianity arose. It should prove especially useful to readers who ask themselves concerning the eighteen years of Christ's life which the gospel narrative passes over."—Scotsman.

"The author holds that the faith to which Jesus wished to convert the world was a monotheism based upon 'the love and fatherhood of God, the love and brotherhood of mankind.' It will be the task of modern reformers, he says, to restore this simple and beautiful faith, which aims at establishing 'a spiritual Empire of love and beauty' destined gradually to absorb all other of the world's religious systems."—Nottingham Daily Guardian.

"A study of the eighteen years of Christ's life which preceded the commencement of His public ministry."

—Birmingham Daily Post.

"This book explains points which are obscure to the average layman. In the hands of a cultured and devout student like the author, one peruses the narrative of the early life of Jesus Christ, not only with sympathy but with advantage. The reader will profit by the contents and whole tenor of the work."—Dundee Advertiser.

"Mr. Emil P. Berg has written an interesting book, in which he seeks to present a few graphic but ideal sketches of the period between the reported visit of Jesus with his parents to Jerusalem and the beginning of his public ministry when he was thirty years old. The writer claims that the view taken in this book of Christ as having been a member of a religious Jewish order during most of this time enables one to throw a good deal of light on the subject."—The Queen.

To be published shortly:-

The Conversion of India, or reconciliation between Christianity and Hinduism, being studies in Indian Missions.

The Spiritual Biography of Jesus Christ.

Where is Heaven?





DATE DUE

JUN. 9	5 1996		
ISEC	8 0 1998		
٠			
	-	-	
			Printed in USA.
HIGHSMITH #45230			



